









MAN OF STEEL

# JOSEF STALIN

## MAN OF STEEL

by  
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ILLUSTRATED



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FOR  
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NO OTHER CONTEMPORARY STATESMAN HAS EXCITED THE flood of comment which has surrounded Josef Stalin and his part in the development of the Soviet Union.

This factor renders impossible any attempt at detailed acknowledgment of every source of information, many of which are now completely unobtainable. The brief Bibliography at the end of the book indicates the main lines of inquiry into this absorbing subject.

I should like to acknowledge my indebtedness to John Lindsey for his suggestion in the preliminary stages; to A. G. Giggs, Esq., without whose sympathetic help the book might never have been written; and to Jack V. Hindle for assistance with the Index.



## PREFACE

WHEN SOVIET RUSSIA'S ARMED FORCES WITHSTOOD THE HITHERTO irresistible advance of the German Wehrmacht, the entire world watched in undisguised astonishment. Within six weeks that astonishment changed to universal admiration, not unmixed with wonder, when General von Kleist scurried westwards from Rostov-on-Don, leaving his Panzer Division to escape as best it could.

The victory at Rostov heralded a general Russian counter-offensive. Troops which, three days before, had formed the "Iron Ring" round Moscow and Leningrad, launched an assault of a magnitude greater than any before seen in history.

The full import of those epic days will not be seen in true perspective until the history of the present war can be viewed as a whole, nevertheless every man and woman to whom the ideal of Freedom means anything has cause for gratitude that Russia should prove so conclusively that the spirit of a united and heroic people is more than equal to whatever weight of metal the Nazis can put in the field.

To anyone familiar with the past military history of Russia, where defeat succeeded defeat for decades, the transformation which has taken place in the space of a quarter century appears little short of miraculous. The Russian people have no such feeling of surprise; they long ago acknowledged that the most important factor in their rise is the personality and achievements of Josef Vissarionovich Djughashvili, called Stalin.

Stalin has always preferred deeds to the wordy bombast of Dictators of the Mussolini-Hitler breeds. Perhaps for this reason far less is known of him than of the others, but without a full and balanced understanding of the past career of Stalin it will never be possible to understand his actions in the future.

Not only will Stalin's Russia play a major role in the war against the Third Reich, she will occupy no less important a seat at the Peace Conferences which will inaugurate the new era of post-war Europe.

Stalin will see to it that the revolt of the European peoples against Hitler will stamp out the last vestiges of National Socialism, and to Stalin are looking the great mass of ordinary citizens who are determined that this time a new Versailles will not be allowed to screen those Germans who, for the second time in twenty years, plunged the world into war.

If this book helps our mutual understanding of the Soviet Union, it will have served its purpose.

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1942.

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	5
CHAPTER	
I. JOSEF VISSARIONNVICH DJUGASHVILI . . . . .	9
II. THE WONDERFUL GEORGIAN . . . . .	20
III. WAR—REVOLUTION—WAR . . . . .	34
IV. LENIN DIES . . . . .	52
V. THE STRUGGLE WITH TROTSKY . . . . .	61
VI. THE PLANS . . . . .	71
1. <i>Industry</i>	
2. <i>The Peasantry</i>	
VII. CALM BEFORE THE STORM . . . . .	87
VIII. CLEARING THE DECKS . . . . .	97
1. <i>The Purges</i>	
2. <i>The Red Army</i>	
3. <i>Appeasement</i>	
IX. RETREAT . . . . .	110
X. WAR . . . . .	118
XI. STALIN . . . . .	125
XII. POINTERS FOR THE FUTURE . . . . .	130
INDEX . . . . .	133



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

MAN OF STEEL . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
STALIN, IN SIBERIAN EXILE, READING A LETTER FROM LENIN . . . . .	16
STALIN, LENIN, KALININ . . . . .	16
VLADIMIR ILYICH ULIANOV (LENIN) . . . . .	48
LEON DAVIDOVICH BRONSTEIN (TROTSKY) . . . . .	64
THE GREAT WARRIOR . . . . .	80
DEATH TO THE TRAITORS . . . . .	96
ADORATION . . . . .	112

## CHAPTER I

### JOSEF VISSARIONOVICH DJUGASHVILI

#### I

IN THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 21ST, 1879, IN THE CAUCASIAN TOWNSHIP OF Gori, Catherine Djugashvili, wife of the village cobbler, nestled in her arms her fourth child—christened Josef but destined to live—Stalin.

Births were frequent in Gori, for the Georgian peasant depended for support in his old age upon the number and strength of the sons to whom he could entrust his few acres of land. But Catherine Djugashvili, gazing into the eyes of her son, saw no future for him as a village shoemaker. Even the loving imagination of a mother could not be expected to see in the infant son of a peasant the future ruler of one-sixth of the habitable surface of the earth, but certain it is that Catherine determined that, whatever her son should be, he should not spend his life tied to a miserable hovel and a patch of land.

If such a determination should seem strange, a glance at a photograph of Catherine Djugashvili, even in her old age, shows plainly that she was no ordinary woman. Beautiful to a degree she possessed the luxuriant black hair of her race, but her most striking feature is the dark heavy-lidded eyes set deeply in a face of extraordinary intelligence. She had already borne three children before Josef, only to see each die in infancy. Perhaps for this reason she clung the more fiercely to the one son who seemed lusty enough to fulfil her dreams.

The township of Gori, where her husband, Vissarion, plied his trade as cobbler, was a large and flourishing village of some five thousand inhabitants, nearly all of them peasants and the sons of peasants. The trade of shoemaker seems to have run in the family for generations, for Vissarion's grandfather had followed the same occupation years before in the nearby village of Didi-Lilo; no doubt, but for the strong will of his mother, Josef Vissarionovich Djugashvili would have occupied the rush-seated stool of his father in Gori, rather than a chair in the inner fastnesses of the Kremlin.

Before pursuing the career of the young Stalin further, it may be well to study first the land and the people into which he was born, for without such understanding much remains incomprehensible in the actions of the Georgian, Stalin, who became ruler of all the Russias, in much the same way as it becomes necessary to study the Corsican origins of Napoleon Bonaparte or the Schickelgrüber-Austrian background of Adolf Hitler.

Gori lies on the left bank of the river Kura, in the very centre of an alluvial plain devoted entirely to agriculture. At the time of Stalin's birth, small peasant proprietors engaged in the production of the best grain in

the whole of the Caucasus and in the making of the sweet and heady wines so much praised by European travellers. Like most fertile lands Georgia has been the scene of numberless invasions. Greek mythology made it the scene of the raid of Jason and the Argonauts, calling it the land of Colchis; Alexander the Great led his armies down the valleys in his advance against the Great King; while in later times the marauding bands of Ghenghiz Khan and Tamerlane spread havoc and ruin among the long-suffering peasants.

The French traveller and historian Réclus identified at least sixty different tongues and an equal number of distinct racial types within the boundaries of Georgia, due to the frequent influxes of new peoples from the less prosperous surrounding lands. As a direct result of its turbulent history was generated a militant nationalist tradition among the Georgian peasantry, accustomed through the centuries to defend their homes against one marauder after another.

In 1801, however, Imperial Russia sent her armies into Georgia, took away the last remnants of her independence and formally declared her part of the Russian Empire. Then followed the blackest period of all in Georgia's history; so terrible became the repression of the Czarist governors that the people declared that the "only right the Caucasian possesses is the right of being tried." For over fifty years bands of Nationalist rebels harried the Russian oppressors, living in the hills and wooded slopes which border the plain.

By the time Josef Djughashvili was born, the last remnants of armed resistance had disappeared but the traditional hatred of the alien Russian rulers lived on in the heart of every true Georgian, waiting for the day when the foreign yoke might once again be broken.

In the early 1870's a new era began for Georgia, deciding the future course of her troubled story and deciding also the transformation of Josef Vissarionovich Djughashvili, playfully nicknamed Sosso by his boyish friends, into Josef Stalin—Red Dictator.

In 1865 Russian engineers began to erect plant at Baku and the surrounding area for the extraction of manganese and naphtha. In 1878, as a direct result of this new development, a beginning was made in railway construction, a process which rapidly increased during the following years. Thus into peasant Georgia, with its age-old traditions and its limited outlook, came modern industry and industrial workers.

By the time the future Stalin was born, Tiflis, some seventy versts from Gori, had no less than one hundred and fifty thousand population and was still growing rapidly. The sons of the local farmers forsook their small holdings and flocked into the new factories as unskilled labourers and there came into contact with the more highly developed skilled workmen from European Russia, men already well versed in labour troubles and familiar with working-class organization. Even the older generation adapted itself to the changed conditions as best it could, bringing its produce into Tiflis to sell to the working-class families, displacing the primitive barter which formerly predominated.

In the midst of these changes Stalin spent his early childhood and most impressionable years. Unlike many of his more talkative contemporaries, Stalin has never discussed the details of his family life and such facts as are obtainable depend mainly upon the recollections of friends and acquaintances writing many years afterwards. According to Catherine

Djughashvili, Josef was sent at the age of eight to the Gori Church School, where he learned the rudiments of reading and writing. It appears doubtful whether at this stage the boy was taught any other language than his native Georgian, for even to-day he speaks Russian very simply and with occasional grammatical errors. He must, however, have rapidly gathered a smattering of Russian from the sons and daughters of the newly arrived workmen, who were among his school-fellows and playmates. Shortly after Josef began school, his father left his cobbler's stool to work on a machine in the Adelskhanov boot factory in Tiflis, thus bringing Stalin more completely within the orbit of the new proletariat.

Enemies of Stalin in his later days have asserted that, shortly after his move to the Tiflis factory, Vissarion Djughashvili took to heavy drinking, while the material conditions of his wife and son grew very much worse. The only justification for this seems to be that Vissarion died a comparatively young man in 1890, leaving his family in very severe straits. Whether his early death was due to alcohol or to the effect of work in the conditions then prevalent in Russian industry matters little. Stalin has always spoken of him, without enthusiasm, as an honest workman and, after his limited fashion, a good father. For Stalin the influence of his mother far overshadowed any effect the happy-go-lucky Vissarion could possibly have exerted.

In 1893, at the age of fourteen, the boy was sent to the Seminary at Tiflis. That such a step should have been possible in view of his family's poverty is a clear indication of his mother's determination to launch him on a career and of his own promise as a scholar. It would seem, from her choice of school, that Catherine intended her son to take holy orders in the Greek Orthodox Church, whose authorities conducted the Seminary for that purpose. If she had any such notion, the reaction of the fourteen-year-old Stalin to his new surroundings very soon dispelled it.

It is a rather strange fact that in all pre-revolutionary epochs, the first germ of new ideas springs from the most unlikely sources. In entering the Tiflis Seminary, that seeming seat of conventional orthodoxy, Sosso Djughashvili stumbled upon a hotbed of progressive thinking of every kind. The Seminary had already achieved a dangerous notoriety and was very closely watched by the authorities. Three times in ten years, anti-Russian demonstrations by the students had caused it to be temporarily closed, while on one unforgettable occasion, after delivering a sneering address on local Georgian culture, the Rector, Chudnietsky, had been stabbed through the heart by an enraged student.

Concurrently with the growth of an industrial proletariat in and around Tiflis, new ideas entered the intellectual circles of the town. In place of the old, purely local loyalties of Georgian nationalism, arose the new conceptions and philosophical beliefs of the European materialist thinkers, generously interlarded with social precepts violently antagonistic to the already detested rule of the Czars.

In the midst of such traditions Stalin began his education proper.

Within two years of his arriving at the Seminary young Djughashvili was already regarded with a good deal of head-shaking by the professors and religious preceptors who made up the staff of the school.

About this time further economic changes became evident. The Tiflis



railway was extended to the Caspian Sea and from there direct to Batoum. The effect of greatly improved transport was soon evident, the petroleum output of Batoum and the surrounding area doubled in six months while the kindred industries showed a correspondingly rapid expansion. Symptomatic of the changed conditions, Stalin watched with growing interest the formation of the first serious attempt at an organized political, rather than nationalist, movement. Under the leadership of the brothers Djibladze and the already celebrated Jordania, all three past students of the Seminary, the first Georgian Social Democratic Party came into being.

Among its first tasks was the organization of small study groups for the discussion of Western Socialism and the translation of the shorter works of Marx and Engels into the Georgian language.

With all these momentous events going on around him, it is in no way remarkable that Stalin should have been drawn into the current. At the age of seventeen or so, youth finds that abstract ideas possess a strong attraction quite apart from their practical import. A glance at the memoirs of his contemporaries, some of them written long before he reached his present greatness, bears witness that even at this early stage there was a peculiarly decisive and unalterable quality about the way in which Stalin entered the political arena, arguing a sense of destiny unusual in a youth. One of his school friends, in a small volume of memoirs published about 1924, recalls the picture of young Stalin riding on the shoulders of a comrade crying in his rather harsh voice, "Ja Stal"—"I am Steel." Whether the incident is apocryphal or not is beside the point, it serves to illustrate the indisputable fact that Stalin was very early conscious of his power and his future calling.

By the time he reached the age of eighteen his growing reputation at the Seminary brought him under the watchful eye of Jordania and the Georgian Social Democrats. Under their guidance Stalin began to read with increasing voracity the forbidden books of European Marxism; as he himself rather naively described it many years later to Henri Barbusse: "I joined the Revolutionary movement at the age of fifteen when I found myself in sympathy with the secret groups of Russian Marxists existing in Transcaucasia. These groups exercised a strong influence over me and gave me a taste for clandestine literature."

Such activities in a High School staffed by reactionary professors and controlled by the Orthodox Church, could not continue indefinitely. It appears that Stalin was first quietly warned by the Rector that his conduct was unsatisfactory and might lead to trouble, but in spite of his extreme youth he was already irrevocably dedicated to his chosen career. He accepted the warning without comment—and went back to his pamphlets and his work. By 1899, at the age of nineteen, the reputation of Sosso Djugashvili had grown sufficiently to cause the Tiflis police to take an interest in his activities among the factory and railway workers of the city. Reports were received by the Seminary authorities describing their pupil's part in several strikes, at which Stalin was frequently seen distributing the literature of the Georgian Social Democratic group. This provided the last straw. An immediate search was instituted of Stalin's room at the Seminary, as a result of which were found, according to the official comment, "books on the natural sciences, sociology and the working-class movement, together with numerous leaflets and other propagandist material."

So soon after previous warnings the school authorities apparently

decided that further efforts to turn Djugashvili from a political career were not worth the trying, paying thereby a tribute to his determination and tenacity of purpose. With many weighty words Stalin was dismissed from the Seminary. No independent evidence is now available to prove beyond question that the future Dictator was expelled, but this appears the most reasonable hypothesis having regard to his activities during this period and the years immediately following. In an interview with an American journalist shortly before her death in 1937, Catherine Djugashvili insisted that her son was never expelled but that she took him away from school voluntarily. "He was always a good boy," she said, "he went to school when he was eight. He worked hard, was always reading and talking. I never remember having to punish him"; and again, even more directly: "He was not expelled. I brought him home on account of ill-health. Overwork up to the age of nineteen pulled him down and the doctors told me that he might develop tuberculosis. So I took him away from school. He did not want to leave, but I took him away because he was my only son." When Catherine made this statement she was seventy-eight years old and in failing health; she can perhaps be excused if, in her natural desire to speak most highly of her "only son," she should seek to refute the suggestion, so terrifying to all mothers, that he was expelled from school.

Whatever the reason, in 1899 Stalin ceased to attend the Seminary. Without a moment's hesitation, without seeking to adjust himself to the outer world into which he was so suddenly thrown, he went, in the graphic words of a friend, "straight over to the workers without a backward glance." Russian Social Democracy had gained one of its ablest recruits since Lenin.

In the same year, far away in Odessa, the young Jew, Leon Davidovich Bronstein, born in the same year as Stalin and destined as Leon Trotsky to be his greatest antagonist, was setting off for Siberia to undergo his first sentence for political crimes.

So ended the first period of Stalin's life, leaving him with his feet firmly planted on the revolutionary road, a road beset with dangers and offering no reward except the certainty of exile, imprisonment and worse. From this time Stalin ceased to be a Georgian and became, in increasing degree, a Russian; but though he succeeded in rising above the limited outlook of a backward and provincial people he carried with him, and still carries, the imprint of his birthplace, revealing it at every major crisis in his life. Georgia has given to Stalin his ruthlessness, his quality of "steel"; he possesses his country's patience and ability to endure in silence yet never to forget. Like Georgia, Stalin can resist without seeming to fight, he can wait in apparent impotence, only to seize with uncanny instinct upon the most propitious moment to take action.

From Georgia and the Tiflis Seminary, Sosso Djugashvili unhesitatingly submerged his entire being in the rushing current of political life, making it necessary, in order to understand his later life, to glance at the Russian Scene.

## 2

The working-class political movement of every European country has reflected in its growth and policies the nature of the industrial revolution which gave it birth. Nowhere is this fact more clearly visible than in Russia during the final quarter of the nineteenth century. The violent

change from a peasant economy to an industrial system, which we have seen at work in the Georgia of Stalin's childhood, was but one example from many extending over the whole of European Russia.

In Britain, the industrial revolution produced not only a proletariat but also a middle class with traditions of Liberalism and humanitarian culture. In Czarist Russia no such third class developed; industries were grafted on to the existing social system by Imperial Ukase and were directly controlled by the Czar himself and the landowning nobility.

According to the Bolshevik historian Pokrovsky, out of a total industrial population of a quarter of a million, more than half were serfs, tied to the factories as they had been tied to the land, working an average of sixteen hours a day yet possessing neither legal nor social rights. The results of such a state of affairs very soon appeared. Rudimentary strikes, sudden local outbreaks of machine-wrecking with retaliatory violence from the Czarist police and Cossacks, became common phenomena in the larger towns of Russia. Moscow, Kazan, Batoum, and Voronezh received object-lessons in repression.

In 1861 occurred an event which exerted a tremendous influence upon the future of Russian working-class policy—the Czar abolished serfdom. The immediate effect was an unprecedented rush of workers from the villages into the towns and factories. As a result the new proletariat increased sevenfold in the next thirty years and the population of the villages so declined as to leave large areas of land uncultivated, to be rapidly converted by the nobility into non-productive grassland for sheep and horses.

Here again the Russian scene takes on an aspect quite different from that of the other nations of Europe—the Russian working class sprang into existence almost in a night and brought to its new vocation the traditions and mentality of the country-side it had so suddenly deserted. To the peasant outlook of the new proletariat was due the striking series of upheavals which began almost at once. In the forty-four years between 1861 and 1905, Pokrovsky has listed no fewer than two thousand separate uprisings and militant strikes, necessitating police action before they were suppressed; a state of affairs which caused more than one western observer to declare that "revolution is something inherent in the Russian mind."

It is to be anticipated that this propensity for sudden outbursts of violence was understood and condoned by Stalin, who even before his expulsion from school had been heard to express admiration for the earlier unsuccessful peasant outbursts led by Stenka Razin and Pugachev against the rule of the Czars. Stalin was fortunate that his own lowly origin had given him an instinctive understanding of the mentality of the Russian countryman which he was to find invaluable in after years, an understanding which his later rival, Trotsky, who was so fond of sneering at what he called "the Russian Soul and Revolution," never managed to acquire.

As a direct product of the chaotic conditions prevailing and the stern repressive measures of the authorities, numbers of advanced thinkers found themselves forced to cry out against existing conditions in much the same way as Voltaire, Montesquieu and the pre-revolutionary writers of France had attacked the decaying fabric of the old regime. The literary giants of nineteenth-century Russia, Pushkin, Tolstoy, Gogol, Dostoevsky, pilloried the government before the world and did not hesitate to devote whole

works to disguised propaganda aimed at destroying the system they found so detestable.

With the accession of Nicholas I, soon to earn the designation the Iron Czar, came an unbridled effort to smash for ever the influences which threatened the Romanov throne. By royal ukase, the numerous secret societies of Freemasons, popularly called the Decembrists, were placed under an official ban. The leaders of the movement, most of them well-meaning humanitarians honestly seeking to improve the lot of the common people, were summarily imprisoned or packed off to Siberia to contemplate, for periods ranging from five years to life, the folly of holding dangerous opinions. Puskin, the greatest literary figure of his time, was saved from life imprisonment only after the intercession of personal friends, as Dostoevsky was later to escape the hangman for similar injudicious remarks against the ruling clique.

"Violence is justifiable when used against violence," Karl Marx was later to declare when paying tribute to these early martyrs to the cause of freedom, and it is not surprising that the bolder spirits among the Russian intelligentsia, faced with the threat of execution if they refused to remain silent, should look around them for allies in the struggle against authority. Such allies they found among the inarticulate masses of the proletariat, struggling instinctively against their oppressors but possessing no programme of action and no clear idea of the social form which should step into the shoes of the Romanovs. Already isolated groups of students, tired of opposing words to the knout and the executioner, were defending themselves against the police with home-made bombs and daggers—already determined spirits were rising, openly proclaiming the creed of "FORCE against FORCE." Within a very few years sharply defined groupings appeared, each with a definite programme of demands and making no secret of a determination to stop at nothing to achieve success.

In studying this period the historian finds himself surrounded by a bewildering series of ephemeral parties and groups, leading a precarious existence, merging and subdividing frequently in their efforts to avoid destruction by the watchful authorities. To Stalin, working patiently among the factory hands of Baku and Tiflis, the situation could not have been much clearer than it is to us.

In spite of this, among the welter of programmes and manifestoes, two main divisions can be clearly distinguished, representing the alternative tendencies between which not only Stalin, but the entire revolutionary generation would shortly have to choose.

Arising directly from the tradition of peasant anarchism, the Narodnaya Volya—the "People's Will"—represented by far the majority of the opponents of Czarism. Recognizing that conditions had rapidly worsened since the beginning of modern Capitalism in Russia, the Narodnaya Volya proclaimed the necessity of returning to the country-side, to the ancient village Mir, advocating the immediate division of the great estates among the peasantry and the dispossessed proletariat. By this expedient they hoped to restore to the Russian people something of the peace and stability which the industrial revolution had so rudely shattered.

On the other side, though at first far less influential, Plehanov, Axelrod and later Lenin, expressed the viewpoint of Marx and the Second Workers' International. It speaks highly of Stalin's perspicacity that even in the



heyday of the "People's Will", he stood firmly by the less spectacular scientific Socialism of the European Marxists. For a period of several years the revolutionary stage was dominated by the Party of the "People's Will" and others differing from the parent organization in details rather than in principles.

In a study of the life of the Bolshevik, Stalin, no useful purpose can be served in tracing the deeds of the "People's Will" in detail. Groups of devoted comrades were organized into small fighting units, operating under the strictest discipline and without regard for personal safety. When a reactionary police official rendered himself more than usually obnoxious, the party central committee calmly ordered his assassination. No less than four unsuccessful attempts were made on the life of the Despot, prominent officials were killed in theatres and public places, the carriages of provincial governors were attacked with bombs, and for all these activities the "People's Will" boldly proclaimed its sole responsibility.

Such a process could not continue indefinitely. Each new outburst, successful or not, cost the life of one or more devoted revolutionary while the murdered official was promptly replaced by an equally reactionary successor. The climax of the existence of the Narodnaya Volya came in 1881 when a group of students, among them a woman, mined the streets of Petrograd and blew up the Imperial coach, killing Alexander II and several of his closest councillors. Exasperated and not a little afraid, officialdom went berserk. Literally hundreds of the foremost fighters of the revolutionary movement were executed and exiled for long terms under strictest surveillance.

Weakened by this thinning of the ranks and deeply disappointed that the successful attempt on the reigning monarch should fail to stimulate the widespread uprisings which had been so confidently expected, the "People's Will" rapidly declined in numbers and influence. In 1887 five young students, the eldest barely twenty-three, were summarily executed for an abortive attempt on the life of the new Czar Alexander III. Their death marks the end of the heroic, if misguided, Narodnaya Volya.

Among these five died Alexander Ilyitch, elder brother of Vladimir Ulianov, later known to the world as V. I. Lenin. The effect of this personal tragedy may well have set the seal to the convictions of the seventeen-year-old Lenin, already devouring the philosophy of Marx and Engels. In a book of memoirs, Maria Ulianova described the effect of the execution upon her family and tells how her brother thrust his fist into the palm of his hand exclaiming "Not along that road."

While the "People's Will" opposed the bomb and the revolver to the hangman's noose, Stalin was serving his political apprenticeship under the able guidance of Noah Jordania and Kornatovski among the railway sheds of Baku and the oil wells of Batoum. His life was a continuous round of the humdrum, menial tasks of the revolutionary neophyte; distributing literature, picketing strikes, keeping watch for the ubiquitous political police and the hundred and one jobs which enabled him to say with justifiable pride after his rise to supreme power: "I was the hall sweeper of the revolution."

Alongside the purely physical tasks Stalin managed to find time to read the translations from Marx which Lenin and his co-workers were so diligently distributing, and with their help he threaded his way through the shifting sands of violent theoretical discussion which were one of the main



[From the painting, *The Shining Light*, by People's Artist, M. Mariasch.

STALIN. IN SIBERIAN EXILE. READING A LETTER FROM LENIN



STALIN. LENIN. KALININ  
A private photograph taken at the 8th Party Congress, March, 1919



preoccupations of the movement in this period. With an instinctive appreciation of the various leaders of the Marxist wing of the revolutionary movement, men who could not have been known to him except by their signatures to articles and propaganda, Stalin hitched his wagon to Lenin's star. Looking back upon these years, and knowing the achievements of Lenin, one is apt to do Stalin scant justice for his choice of leader. When he made his decision Lenin was, if anything, least known of all the prominent figures of the Marxist group, exerting far less influence than his associates Plehanov, Axelrod and Vera Zassulich.

In later life Stalin has described his conviction that even at this early stage Lenin was destined to be the principal figure in the coming struggle. Some of his biographers have gone so far as to accuse him of being wise after the event in regard to Lenin, forgetting the incontrovertible fact that his every subsequent political action has been strictly governed by Lenin's ideas and writings.

By 1900 the individual personality of Lenin was beginning to detach itself from his former teachers. Although no outward sign of the growing diversion of views appeared until the Iskra split of 1903, a study of those articles in the party press which can be assigned to Lenin, show that he was already developing certain definite lines of thought peculiar to himself.

According to the future creator of the Soviet State, the old Populist groups failed because they wrongly believed that mass action against the state could be stimulated by individual acts of heroism against the oppressor. This view, said Lenin, inverts the true state of affairs. Using the seizure of power in revolutionary France by the Jacobins as his example, he set out to show that a widespread mass movement is not necessary for the overturn of a social order; all that is needed is a highly organized party prepared to grasp the reins of authority by force of arms at the most propitious moment. "When the Party has seized power, then is the time to call upon the masses to support the Party and enable it to hold on to its conquest"—this was the central idea of Lenin's programme as expressed in his writings in Iskra and other publications of the Party.

With this end in view he set out to gather round him the men to whom he could entrust the preparations for the seizure of power. In 1903, when the break came between Lenin and his co-workers on the programme to be put forward by the Party, there was never a moment's doubt as to which side would obtain the support of Sosso Djughashvili, now beginning to use the name Stalin.

Stalin himself says he first made contact with his future leader by letter sent from exile in Siberia to Lenin, who was then living in London. Although this is doubtless true on Stalin's side, it is none the less certain that a man who took as keen an interest in Russian affairs as Lenin, must already have been aware of the existence of the Georgian revolutionary who was creating such a stir in the Caucasian oil lands.

By 1900 Stalin had already served his apprenticeship in the hard school of revolutionary experience. Though barely twenty-one he had established a name for himself in the records of the secret political police, who traced his activities in five different towns and under six aliases in the short space of twenty months. On May Day, 1901, we find him at the head of a demonstration demanding higher pay for the factory workers of Tiflis, a demonstration which successfully stood its ground in face of a purple visaged

governor uttering threats of imprisonment and the knout. Three months later the familiar figure, with its mop of black hair and its inevitable sheaf of pamphlets, turns up in Batoum organizing a railwaymen's strike. This time his work was not so successful. The local police raided one of the meetings at which Stalin was not present and removed the entire company to gaol. Within three hours the prison was besieged by a crowd hastily gathered from the nearby marshalling yards and led by Stalin. After a bitter struggle which resulted in several deaths, the prisoners were released. Such a deed, however, could not be ignored. He was promptly arrested, given the customary travesty of a trial and sentenced to eighteen months in prison to be followed by a further eighteen months in administrative exile in Siberia.

The police chief Chabelsky, who had charge of the case against Stalin, supplied the following official data on the prisoner, under the date June 17th, 1902:

Height, 2 archins, 4½ vershoks. Physique, medium. Age 23. Special features: second and third toes of the left foot attached. Appearance ordinary. Hair, beard and moustaches dark. Nose straight and long. Face long, dark-skinned and pockmarked.

It is the general belief among Western readers that Siberian exile represented the very last word in human degradation and physical agony. In reality, except for certain special criminals, this was far from the case. Stalin's period in Siberia was no different from that experienced by many thousands of his comrades and may be accepted as giving a general idea of the conditions then prevailing.

From the local prison at Batoum he was sent by easy stages, travelling largely by river, to the province of Irkutsk, where he joined the little colony of political exiles at the village of Novaya Uda. Here some two hundred men and women, drawn from the shattered ranks of Narodnaya Volya and the new Social Democratic Federation, lived in tiny huts and communal dwellings.

Stalin was lucky in that he found in exile many older comrades willing to share their practical and theoretical experience with this earnest newcomer, whose reputation was already such as to mark him out for an important rôle in the coming years. With his unerring instinct for practical necessities, Stalin broke up the innumerable personal arguments and hair-splittings and organized study groups and discussion circles at which every tendency in the movement was permitted expression. He himself, though not an orator, had benefited by his early training at the hands of the religious preceptors of the Tiflis Seminary to develop a clear and incisive style, devoid of the temperamental flourishes frequently found in revolutionary orators, a style eminently suited to the lucid explanation of economic doctrines to an audience consisting largely of industrial workers. Whereas Lenin invariably spent his periods of imprisonment in writing philosophical and political treatises, the less erudite but equally enthusiastic Stalin exerted his every effort to bring over embittered visionaries from the "People's Will" and class-conscious workmen to the scientific tenets of Marxism. Proof of his successful efforts in this direction is given by many influential members of the present Soviet Government who ascribe their first conversion

to revolutionary socialism to contact with Stalin during one or other of his numerous spells of exile.

While serving this particular sentence, Stalin took one of the most important steps of his life. Eagerly devouring the smuggled copies of the Party organ *Iskra* (the Spark), which arrived by devious means at Novaya Uda, Stalin found himself increasingly impressed by those articles which carried the initials of Lenin. Hesitating no longer he wrote a letter to Lenin in London. In December, 1903, after a lapse of almost six months, he received a reply which, in his own words, "contained an amazingly clear explanation of the tactics of our Party and a brilliant analysis of our future tasks." From that day he became Lenin's man and never for an instant deviated from his allegiance.

About the time Stalin's letter was being carried across frontiers and past customs officials, Lenin was in Brussels preparing for the opening sessions of the "Constituent Congress of the Workers' Social Democratic Party of Russia." Fifty-eight delegates had successfully run the gauntlet of the Czar's police and were gathered for the first time to discuss plans for the future. The opening meeting was symbolic of the destiny of the new party which was to pass through such turbulent seas of revolt to the final seizure of absolute power throughout Russia.

Scarcely had the first speakers opened the Congress when a detachment of gendarmes arrived and, after subjecting every delegate to a rigorous search, declared further meetings illegal. At Lenin's suggestion the entire congress packed up its scanty impedimenta and moved to the more congenial atmosphere of Edwardian London.

After this inauspicious beginning, each successive meeting of the delegates, of which no less than fifty-eight were held, produced the most acrid divisions of opinion. From the welter of words, two main divisions crystallized; on one side Lenin and Plehanov, on the other Martov, Axelrod and the twenty-four-year-old Trotsky. By a narrow margin the draft programme presented by the Lenin-Plehanov group carried the day, but did not succeed in conciliating the minority fraction which soon constituted itself a separate organization with a separate programme, approximating more closely to the traditional ideas of the old populist movement. From this split arose the two tendencies in Russian Revolutionary Socialism known as Bolshevik (majority) and Menshevik (minority).

Some months later news of the division reached Stalin in his Siberian exile; immediately he ranged himself beside Lenin, whose plans for the creation of a semi-military organization were so close to his own. Laconic as ever, he described the situation to his fellow prisoner, Kandelaki, as "a storm in a teacup in which Lenin is definitely correct."

The same sense of affinity which decided Stalin to support Lenin made Lenin seek out the Georgian revolutionary, whom he knew only as Koba Djughashvili, as a man admirably fitted to act as the executive agent of the conspiratorial plans which were to be so important in the coming struggle.

About this period, Lenin, who was never given to easy praise, described Stalin as "the wonderful Georgian," a designation of which he is still justifiably proud.

Correspondence began immediately, as Stalin painstakingly prepared himself for the tasks Lenin was so carefully detailing. During the final months of his stay in Novaya Uda he devoted less time to the other members

of the colony except those few whose experience was concerned with the actual organization of workers groups and underground activities. The nature of his studies and the value of his plans was soon to be tested under fire.

From this time Sosso Djughashvili passes from the scene for ever to be replaced by Josef Stalin, professional revolutionary and right hand of Lenin.

## CHAPTER II

### THE WONDERFUL GEORGIAN

"PERHAPS I HAD MORE BOOK LEARNING THAN MANY OF THESE COMRADES, but in the practice of revolution I was still a beginner. Among these comrades (the railwaymen and oil workers) I received my first baptism of fire in revolution. As you see, my first teachers were the workers of Tiflis. Allow me to express to them my gratitude. Well I remember the following years when, at the desire of the Party, I was thrown into the work at Baku. Two years of revolutionary work among the oil workers made me a *practical* fighter and a practical leader. In the society of the advanced section of workers at Baku on the one hand, and on the other to the stormy conflicts between the oil workers and the oil masters, I learned for the first time what the leadership of great masses of workmen really meant. I had my second baptism of fire in revolution. Then I became a journeyman of revolution"—thus in his own words Stalin described his early struggles as Lenin's spokesman.

In January of 1904 Stalin received, through the usual tortuous avenues, a small package containing money and a forged passport, the latter being rendered necessary by the existing laws compelling all citizens to produce their papers even when crossing from one province to another. Within six weeks we find him at the house of a comrade in St. Petersburg using the name Ivanovich, gathering information on events which had occurred during his absence and collecting materials for the furtherance of those schemes he had evolved among the tundra of Novaya Uda.

A month later he was back in his old haunts at Tiflis picking up the threads of his former work. The situation which confronted him was serious. The young Bolshevik organizations in Tiflis and Baku had been too much dependent upon the practical leadership of Stalin to work out correctly for themselves the complex problems of the workers' movement. The newly returned leader very soon realized that what he had left as a promising Bolshevik group had virtually ceased to function.

About the same time he made the acquaintance of a fellow Georgian, Sergo Ordjonikidze, who was to remain his faithful friend and follower through many vicissitudes, until his death in 1937. Together these two men of similar temperament set about rehabilitating the sadly depleted Bolshevik organization. As a preliminary step, Stalin set up the newspaper *Dro* (the Times) in Tiflis and took over the editorship of the *Bakinsky Rabochi* (Baku Proletarian) at Baku. By their means he placed the basic ideas of Lenin before his readers, simply and directly, but with such conviction that not only large numbers of the Social Revolutionary Party came over to

him but also many of the local Mensheviks. The real success of his efforts was not fully discernible until late in 1905, when the Georgian Bolsheviks were one of the few groups who managed to seize power and hold it until dispossessed by main force.

1904 began with ominous rumblings against Czarist rule from both ends of the social scale. The small middle class, without political power and deliberately ignored by the aristocracy, were subjected to a terrible burden of taxation without even possessing the elementary rights of free competition, which the Government could not allow because the Czar himself held a virtual monopoly in many essential industries. The middle class, naturally enough, endeavoured to balance the adverse pressure from above by reducing wages and production costs at the expense of the workers. By May and June a wave of strikes swept across the country, electrifying the local Bolshevik party members into a frenzy of activity. Everywhere the same spirit prevailed; strikes produced repressions and brought the Cossacks back among the protesting crowds; blows from the Cossacks produced more strikes of greater violence.

Faced by a situation fraught with such dangers the Czar decided to "ride the tiger" by embarking on a war, in the hope that by this means he could unite the nation behind the Romanovs against an external enemy. Unfortunately for the court, Russia's military and naval leaders miscalculated badly. The chosen enemy, Japan, had not only outgrown her backwardness but, with the assistance of Britain, had developed a modern army and a navy which virtually chased the Russians off the Eastern Seas. The Russian armies were defeated in battle after battle revealing the most scandalous inefficiency in high quarters. So severe were the defeats and the obvious discontent among the armed forces, that the revolting workers and peasants throughout Russia increased their activities and their demands.

In characteristic fashion the Czar answered with the only voice he ever used in addressing the common people—the machine-gun and the whip. Anti-Jewish pogroms were instituted by the notorious Black Hundred Bands; while the civil authorities looked on with indifference, peaceful strikers were everywhere assaulted by the police. In the midst of the chaos, a Nationalist revolt began in Poland, led by the young Pilsudski and financed with Japanese money. Even in these dire straits the Czar refused to make any concession; the lists of floggings, hangings and deportations stretched on interminably.

In order to be more free to deal with his rebellious subjects, Nicholas II patched up a hasty and humiliating peace with the Japanese and turned his armies against the strikers. Even this drastic step was not at first successful. Three regiments, ordered to act against civilians, arrested their officers and fraternized with the rebels, while the sailors at the naval base at Kronstadt were so far influenced by the new ideas that they set up their own revolutionary committee on board the Admiral's flagship. Luckily for the Czar, the Japanese war had finished before discontent had seeped through the entire Russian Army. The majority of the regiments remained faithful and allowed themselves to be used, first to eliminate the mutineers and then to break up the strikers. This process took a considerable time during which there appeared for the first time, the organizations which Lenin had for so long been advocating.

Arising first as a local committee to co-ordinate strike action in the



various big factories, the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' Deputies very soon extended its activities to the direction of the municipal life of the city. Some two hundred and fifty delegates, among them a small but influential group of Bolsheviks, met under the chairmanship of a young Socialist lawyer named Khrustalev and began to institute far-reaching reforms. Khrustalev was very soon arrested, but his place was taken by a committee of three delegates, one of whom was the twenty-six-year-old Trotsky who, in spite of his serious disagreements with Lenin, had returned to Russia to participate in the fight against authority. The Soviet was not permitted to live long enough seriously to improve matters; at its next meeting a detachment of police and soldiers arrived, declared every one of the two hundred and fifty members under arrest and all further gatherings illegal.

So ended the first Soviet of Workers' Deputies. Although it achieved little of practical importance it gave the Petrograd working men a taste of self-government, an example which remained as an inspiration and encouragement until the day when a similar gathering assumed permanent control of the city in October, 1917.

In far-off Georgia, Stalin was more successful, reaping the benefit of the years of patient work in the Caucasus region. Under his direction a representative assembly composed largely of Bolsheviks and members of the peasant revolutionary party, the Social Revolutionaries, began its sessions. As if to drive the already exasperated working class still further along the path of revolt, the Government took an indescribably criminal step which was to make the name of Imperial Russia an object of loathing in Europe.

On January 22nd, 1905, a crowd of some 200,000 people, led by the orthodox priest Father Gapon, marched to the royal palace in St. Petersburg to present a petition comprising a number of quite moderate proposals. Some confusion exists on the point, but it seems that Father Gapon, in addition to his calling as a priest, was also in the pay of the secret police. At a given signal he was allowed to pass through the police cordon drawn up in the square before the palace. Without parley, without even issuing the order to disperse, Cossack troops opened rifle and machine-gun fire on the peaceful demonstrators, harrying them with repeated sabre charges. Goaded to desperation by this insane brutality, the mob rushed the barriers, dragging down the Cossack horsemen with their bare hands. Thousands died that day, a fitting comment on the state of Imperial Russia. "Bloody Sunday" was never forgotten and its effect was soon apparent.

A general strike began immediately in St. Petersburg, in Moscow and, of all places, in the province of Guria in Georgia where Stalin had been so long preparing for just such a moment.

For over three months the entire province was administered solely by the revolutionaries who, at Stalin's instigation, endeavoured to crowd into their short period of power as many illustrations as possible of what material benefits might be expected from workers' rule.

During these short months Stalin received his first lessons in government, lessons in success and failure which he never forgot. Here, too, he revealed qualities hitherto dormant in his character. Still in his middle twenties, he had returned to a Georgia where, in the words of P. Makharadze, "the directing organs of the Party were entirely in Menshevik hands" and in less than a year had restored the Bolsheviks to control and led them to unthought-of influence.

To Lenin, keenly watching from London, the success of his schemes as applied by Stalin must have given no small satisfaction. With the smashing of the Guria Soviet, the revolution of 1905 was finally defeated, but its importance for the future was clearly visible; as Lenin later put it: "Without the rehearsal of 1905, the success of the revolution of 1917 would have been impossible."

As a result of the experiences gained during the upheaval the Russian proletariat received practical lessons which were never forgotten in spite of the twelve years of comparative calm which followed. Whereas the working man had had to give his support to one or other of the parties on the basis of its written programme only, he could now choose as a result of his observations of the parties in action. Subsequent events, though long delayed, gave convincing proof that the object lesson had not been in vain. The Social Revolutionaries, with their individual terrorism and anarchistic tendencies derived from the days of the "People's Will," fell sharply in the eyes of their most advanced adherents. Having no programme other than the immediate destruction of Czarism, root and branch, they were seen to be incapable of producing anything in place of the system they sought to destroy. Despite the stirring deeds of their most representative leader, Maria Spiridonova, the Social Revolutionaries never again came within striking distance of supreme power; one of their principal figures, Savinkov, even passed over to the service of the Okhrana, the Czar's secret police.

Between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks the choice was not quite so simple, since both had participated in the Soviets, the Menshevik Trotsky, even acting as President in Petrograd. Nevertheless, thanks to the uncompromising attitude of Lenin, backed by Stalin's successes in Guria, certain facts stood out in high relief. While the Menshevik papers carried long articles dealing with every philosophical and theoretical aspect of the rising, Lenin in "Yperod" was publishing instruction in the use of arms and distributing instructive leaflets giving plans for barricades and advice in street fighting.

Besides foreshadowing the events of July to October, 1917, the outburst of 1905 brought into the limelight the personalities who were to take leading rôles in the final overthrow of Czarism.

Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky, each passed across the stage of 1905, revealing even in such a short period the principal qualities which were later to become so familiar. Lenin, who had spent so many years in exile, tested his assessment of the Russian situation, tested the plans to which he had given such painstaking attention and, reassured by the course of events, pursued his ideas to their logical outcome. In the decade of reaction which followed, he never ceased to try his theories upon the yard stick of 1905. Trotsky also showed his metal, his good qualities and his fatal weakness. After years spent in vacillating between the Menshevik camp and a position of solitary glory, he rushed back to Russia to participate in the gathering storm. In the sessions of the Petrograd Soviet and in innumerable mass meetings, he established a reputation as an orator of a very high order, able to sway crowds in a manner reminiscent of Danton and Marat. Energy he had in plenty, and if he seemed arrogant and over-weening, it was not difficult to excuse his failings on the grounds of his youth.

As far as the average Russian workman and peasant was concerned,

deprived alike of the opportunity to read Lenin or to hear Trotsky, the greatest gain in personal prestige went to Stalin. The Georgia Soviet endured longest of all and gave practical proof of the principles upon which it stood; it is not surprising that its reputation and that of its best known representative should spread throughout Russia and remain in the years of depression as an example of the past and a hope for the future.

For Stalin the effect of this interlude was to convince him still more firmly that among the galaxy of intellectuals who dominated the Party, Lenin was the man most likely to succeed. Towards the end of 1905 Stalin met his mentor for the first time at a Party conference in Tammerfors in Finland, during which he gathered fresh suggestions and new directives and described for the great man's benefit the momentous days of the Guria Soviet.

Each took away with him a definite picture of the other; Stalin, surprised and awed at the tremendous powers of Lenin, powers hidden behind so ordinary an appearance; Lenin recognizing that at last he had to his hand the tool which would forge the future Revolutionary Party.

The decade following 1905 is the most confusing in the history of the Bolsheviks. The factional squabbles, splits, proposals and counter proposals which had formerly been plentiful enough were now increased sevenfold. The trumpetings of Trotsky and the Mensheviks, to the effect that new upheavals were at hand, soon became nothing more than empty echoes, contrasting hopelessly with the realities of the situation. Lenin alone was completely conscious of this important fact and began unhesitatingly to discourage the false hopes and wishful thinking of men who were too slow in testing the real feelings of the masses. The Russian working class was still in political infancy in addition to having suffered a serious defeat at the hands of the established authority; to call upon men in such a frame of mind to strike new blows for freedom was, in Lenin's eyes, a sure way to the political refuse heap.

Weak-willed and vicious, the Czar was none the less sufficiently frightened by the widespread nature of the revolt to cast off for a short space the leading strings of the Czarina and the fortune tellers who crowded the court and promulgated some small measure of reform. To the western mind the so-called "Agrarian Reform" of 1906 seems scarcely worth the name, but for Russia it represented a definite step forward and seemed to offer promise of a more hopeful future; 1907-8 and 9 were plentiful years with a harvest such as had not been seen since before the turn of the century. The Autarchy entered upon the brief period of lull before the storm.

Upon the parties of the Left the effect of improved living conditions was soon apparent. Deprived of the opportunity to apply their doctrines to a working class in action against authority, they rapidly deteriorated into what Stalin so contemptuously calls "talk shops." Having lost the majority of their worker members, the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary intellectuals concerned themselves with theoretical abstractions progressively more divorced from reality.

In these years the true stature of Lenin revealed itself, for without him the Bolshevik Party would unquestionably have sunk to final dissolution and impotence, as did all the others. Without mincing his words, Lenin

demonstrated that the movement was embarking upon the ebb tide of revolution and must either adjust itself or disappear. He declared open war on theorizers and compromisers alike, demanding that the Party should place itself under strict discipline and prepare for action. He refused the many gestures, some less honest than others, calling for a reuniting of the divided movements. "Let the conciliators come to us, work among us and prove their worth. Then they can unite with us on the basis of common principles"; it was a very one-sided conception of what unity meant, but it offered the only possible way out of chaos.

The first result of this stubborn intransigence was to bring upon Lenin the vapouring wrath of Trotsky, who proceeded to belabour the Bolshevik leader in a shower of articles breathing a crescendo of abuse. "Lenin wants to play Robespierre, to dictate terms and lay down laws," screamed Trotsky in the midst of a particularly embittered argument which concluded with the sneering epithet "Maximilian Lenin." Lenin's replies, if more dignified, were no less virulent: "We are not afraid of big words," he said; "we look at the actions behind them. What is Trotsky doing for the movement by this pretence of superiority and these ridiculous appeals for a unity that could only provide opportunities for greater and more serious divisions?" Stalin, in the Baku and Tiflis workmen's newspapers, took much the same view, arguing that the successful organization of a strike or a widespread demonstration would do a great deal more to bring about unity than a thousand clever sentences from a man as unstable as Trotsky.

Except in questions of major importance which called for comment, Lenin began to ignore the criticisms so freely levelled at him from all sides. The ideas he had so patiently formulated were to be tested in the field of action, not used as verbal ammunition in factional fighting. With the object of keeping itself together in face of the growing reaction, the Bolshevik party concentrated on bringing its members to a high pitch of revolutionary intelligence instead of calling vainly for a huge mass of inexperienced supporters. The men who had shown themselves closest to the masses in 1905 were elevated to high places in the movement, displacing the *émigré* intellectuals whose achievements were never translated into practice; "separating the doers from the talkers," as Lenin put it. A central committee of four, dominated by Lenin, set out their immediate objectives as to "create a small nucleus of fighters organized on military lines," "establish contacts in the Russian mines and factories"—"undermine the Army and Navy."

As a first step in this tremendous programme Lenin laid down certain rules which were to govern the internal affairs of the Party, the system which he was later to describe as "Democratic Centralism." In preliminary discussions on policy, complete freedom and expression was to be permitted, but when once a course of action had been decided by a majority every member of the organization must obey that decision without question.

This view produced a howl of execration from Trotsky and Martov, who insisted that it would result in the stifling of all individuality and initiative, to which Lenin replied: "Democracy by no means implies the absence of power; it is not anarchy; it is the supremacy of the mass of the electorate over its representatives, while under other forms of rule the

so-called servants of the people are in reality its masters," a statement as significant to-day as when it was made. When Trotsky repeated his gibe that Lenin aspired to the destiny of Robespierre, the Bolshevik leader boldly accepted the appellation, remarking that the Jacobins at least were bound up indissolubly with the working class and did not pretend to stand in isolated glory above the problems at issue. Although no indication can be found among Stalin's writings at this time, his subsequent characterization of Trotsky most probably had its roots in this period, for he was in later years to turn Trotsky's guns against their inventor when he attempted to emulate Bonaparte and assume dictatorial powers over the conquests of a great revolution.

In spite of the adverse reception accorded to his thesis, Lenin stuck to his views. The backwardness of the Russian people, plus the numerical weakness of the working class, compared with the more reactionary peasantry, made a nation-wide revolt against Czarism very improbable, at least for several years; therefore, in Lenin's opinion, "our task should be to form a clandestine group of leaders who can set the largest possible mass in motion." To this end detailed suggestions were distributed, through the agency of Stalin, to the faithful few who remained convinced of the correctness of Lenin's position, indicating tactics to be used in preparing the "advance guard of revolution." Each experienced comrade was to gather round himself a small group of class-conscious workmen, initiate them into the basic principles of economics and prepare them for a long and arduous struggle against opposition from other Socialist groups and the state police.

In activity of this kind, Stalin had already made a considerable reputation and to his work at this period can be traced the remarkably large number of Bolsheviks of Georgian origin who were later to rise to positions of importance in the Soviet world. Ordjonikidze we have already met in Siberian exile; another, Yenukidze, later Secretary of the Soviets, was to say, in a series of lectures in 1928, "Comrade Stalin carries on his shoulders the whole of the Bolshevik movement in Transcaucasia." When the new recruits were deemed proficient they were distributed through Stalin's central clearing-house among factories and industrial plants, there to bring over others to the cause. In contrast to Trotsky, whose audiences had to run into hundreds, the unspectacular burrowings of Lenin and Stalin seem very insignificant; the events of the following years were needed to show whose way was most effective. Thousands of the leading Bolsheviks who crossed the stage in 1917 were pupils of these early schools of Leninism, while Trotsky for all his brilliance, brought with him not one single associate.

Once the preliminary steps had been instituted, the Central Committee began to draw up plans for the final and most difficult task of all. Study of 1905 had convinced Lenin that no revolutionary movement could seize power in a modern state if the Army and Navy remained faithful to the Government. Particular note was taken of those regiments which had refused to act as strike-breakers and young comrades were detailed by Stalin to enlist in these units to create revolutionary cells among the soldiery. The privileged Cossacks and the traditional regiments drawn exclusively from backward regions could be relied upon to do the bidding of their rulers, but the Russo-Japanese war and the necessity of main-

taining strong forces on the many frontiers had greatly increased the number of working men and poor peasants among the soldiers. Such men Lenin regarded as potential allies in the future struggle for power.

Here again history was to prove him right, for as a result of the permeation of Bolshevik ideas into the Army, only the Cossacks opposed the overthrow of the Czar, while a solitary battalion of women soldiers defended the Winter Palace for Kerensky. As far as the Russian Navy was concerned, the position was less difficult. The sailors, particularly those stationed at the naval base at Kronstadt, already possessed strong revolutionary traditions of their own. Mutinies in the Russian fleet had occurred as far back as the reign of Peter the Great and flared up again almost every time the peoples rose in revolt. After the Kronstadt mutiny of 1905, the ringleaders were shot without trial before the eyes of their assembled comrades. As a result of this Lenin soon found sympathetic hearers among the sailors, who readily agreed to Stalin's suggestion that they should keep open the channels of communication with the *émigré* leaders who were at this time living in Geneva, and also be responsible for the smuggling of illegal documents into the country.

One further lesson from 1905 remained and upon it Lenin based his plans for the future revolutionary government of Russia. He was quick to realize that the workers of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kazan and other centres must set up governing committees made up of delegates from factories because of an instinctive urge to turn the struggle against the Czar into a fight for better social conditions. On the basis of this appreciation the Bolsheviks early came to understand that the party which called most clearly for Workers' Soviets would appeal strongly to this desire and might derive benefit from it. Stalin's success with the Guria Soviet was a case in point. By painstaking effort and laborious attention to details Lenin succeeded in holding his Party together while every other group disintegrated; under his guidance the foundations of the later Bolshevik successes was soundly laid.

With these objectives in view the leading personalities among the Party began to take on separate tasks and assume particular responsibilities. In sound military fashion Lenin set up his Headquarters Staff. He himself took over the general strategic direction of the struggle while, by virtue of his proven capabilities, Stalin became the principal executive agent within Russia of the orders of the G.H.Q.

For the highly important job of Financial Adviser, the Party unanimously elected the wealthy engineer Leonid Krassin who had already supplied considerable sums from his own purse and from the more advanced sections of the Russian middle class. In spite of his large-scale purchases of the arms of soldiers returning from the Japanese war, Krassin was still comparatively unknown to the police. While Stalin recruited assistants in Russia, Krassin's job was to keep them supplied with the money necessary to enable them to devote their whole time to political work and to prepare the technical material necessary to their calling. Krassin died before the Soviet Government consolidated its power and his name is consequently less well known to students of the period, yet his influence and achievements at this juncture were of major importance.

Innumerable portable printing presses, accurately forged passports and



the minutiae of the revolutionary's craft were forwarded by Krassin through all manner of mysterious channels into the depths of Russia, even to the Arctic regions in which so many of the best fighters were continually to be found.

As a result of Stalin's success in gaining recruits for the Party, the money hitherto obtained by legal means soon became inadequate; new and bolder methods were debated by the three directing heads. After much weighty consideration it was decided to relieve the financial situation by conducting what were euphemistically called "expropriations." The very term itself has a different meaning according to the social credo of its user. For the Bolsheviks an expropriation meant taking money from a capitalist in advance of the revolution, money of which he would ultimately be relieved in any case; to the government and the forces of law and order "expropriation" was just another term for robbery with violence. For Lenin and his two lieutenants the question of the moral justification of such a proceeding did not arise; if by "expropriations" the cause of revolution could be furthered, no other question was worthy of consideration.

In this step, as in so many others, Lenin met a storm of criticism, this time chiefly from the older generation of Plehanov, Axelrod and Vera Zassulich, who were quick to point out the danger that to teach Russian workmen how to obtain large sums of money without toil was much more likely to increase the ranks of banditry than revolution. Lenin's retort was that "needs must when the devil drives," the admittedly grave risks would have to be taken if money was to be obtained at all. Stalin in Tiflis undertook the organization of the coups which it was hoped would provide funds to keep the organization alive.

Whatever Lenin and Krassin calculated on obtaining as a result of the new tactic, they certainly were not prepared for the tremendous results of the efficacy of Stalin's methods which soon appeared. It is customary in most biographies of Stalin to omit all mention of his directing part in the celebrated "expropriations," or at best to gloss over them hurriedly as a rather discreditable episode. To take this course is to fail to understand the character of Stalin, who never hesitated to call a spade a spade and never feared to accept responsibility for his actions, irrespective of whether or not they met with general approval. If Lenin agreed and the ultimate success of the revolution was brought nearer, no other factors had any bearing on the problem.

In order to avoid a tedious record of the many "exes" in which Stalin's hand is visible, a brief account can be given of the career of the man who was chosen to execute the actual operations, illustrating both their wide scope and the type of man upon whom Stalin's choice fell.

Such a character was Simon Ter-Petrossian, boyhood friend and devoted assistant of Stalin, to whom he owed the name Kamo, by which he is best known. While Stalin was studying in the Seminary at Tiflis, Kamo was helping the Social Revolutionaries against the Cossacks. While still in his teens he was twice captured and had already lost a piece of his ear under torture; at nineteen he was made to dig his own grave, but managed somehow to elude his enemies. By 1900, under the influence of Stalin, his allegiance had passed to the Bolsheviks, who proceeded to employ his peculiar abilities to maximum advantage. After one highly successful expropriation in May, 1905, Kamo was sent with the proceeds into the

Balkans to purchase arms. He was soon back in his native Caucasus, rich in half-legendary brigands, where he had little difficulty in gathering together a small band of outlaws to be trained to execute the work which Stalin had been assigned by his co-directors.

A beginning was made in the first weeks of 1907, when Kamo journeyed to Finland to see Krassin and obtain the materials required for his difficult task. He returned in a month, with some fifty bombs of rather rudimentary type produced in Krassin's laboratory and a good supply of small arms. While preparing an attack on a local post office one of the bombs exploded in Kamo's home, causing him to lose the sight of one eye. Three days later he was informed that a large sum of money was to be transferred next day to the Tiflis State Bank. In spite of his injuries, he left immediately to gather his comrades and make plans for the coming day.

On the following morning, shoppers in the Tiflis square remarked on the behaviour of an officer in Cossack uniform apparently awaiting the arrival of a friend. The officer was none other than Kamo, dressed in uniform in order to appear less suspicious if his long wait should become conspicuous. Various groups of workmen and peasants were chatting freely at the entrance to the square into which was driven, about eleven o'clock, an open carriage containing two women. This was a prearranged signal indicating the approach of the money which soon entered the square in a closed carriage guarded by six mounted Cossacks. Some two hundred yards behind the official conveyance came another and larger carriage whose driver carelessly drew his horses across the street making entry into the square impossible. At a given signal the driver of the last vehicle leaped from his seat and hurled two bombs under the feet of the horses, blowing out one side of the covered wagon. Simultaneously eight more explosions occurred, killing three of the Cossacks and seriously wounding the others; two bank clerks who were lifting the money into the street were also killed. In the midst of this indescribable confusion the uniformed officer ran to the scene, dragged the heavy iron cash-box over to the carriage of his two women comrades and drove off to the accompaniment of screams and revolver shots.

So successfully was the coup planned that every participant succeeded in getting away without difficulty. When Kamo arrived at his prearranged meeting-place with Stalin, investigation of the contents of the box must have staggered them both. The Bolshevik exchequer had benefited by no less than 340,000 roubles in 500-rouble notes, in value slightly less than 45,000 English pounds.

Before pursuing the career of Kamo further, the affair of the Tiflis money must be concluded. Kamo himself transported it to Krassin in Finland, who immediately distributed it among trusted comrades in the various European Capitals, charging them with the task of transferring the original notes into other, less dangerous, currency. Some time later one of these agents was caught in Paris carrying an attaché case full of the stolen bills which he was endeavouring to change at a local bank. He was arrested, but, fortunately for the future of the League of Nations, the liberal French Government refused a Russian demand for his extradition. The name of that man is now Maxim Litvinov.

As for Kamo, he was back again in his old haunts almost at once, but, acting on the advice of Krassin, Stalin sent his old friend out of the

country until his presence in Russia should become less dangerous. Kamo's idea of a rest was somewhat unusual, and within six months he was imprisoned in Berlin for being in possession of large quantities of explosives and at least one "infernal machine." In his prison cell he received a note from Krassin advising him that his only hope of escaping the hangman was to feign madness. This pretence he maintained for four years, suffering the most incredible hardships until a panel of specialists reluctantly agreed that he was definitely insane.

Even then his troubles were not over, his captors returned him to the tender mercies of the Russian Government, by whom he was again imprisoned. Stalin had not forgotten him and six months later the celebrated "Caucasian Brigand," as he was affectionately called, walked into Lenin's house on the Finnish border. His health was obviously broken and Lenin sent him to recuperate in Constantinople. Arrested on board ship, he was again discovered with a large package of explosives. This time he was more fortunate, the Turkish authorities released him on condition that he left the country.

By September, 1912, he was back in the Caucasus, re-establishing his old band and preparing new exploits. In an attempt on a wagon train he was unlucky enough to meet with an unusually large Cossack guard which effected his capture. Once again Kamo found himself imprisoned under sentence of death. By good fortune a sympathetic magistrate commuted his sentence to life imprisonment and Simon Ter-Petrossian remained in prison until the overthrow of Czarism lifted him to his rightful place among the heroes of the Bolshevik movement. To the selfless devotion of men of the calibre of Stalin and Kamo, Lenin owed much of his rise to power.

The Tiflis "ex" caused the chief of Police, General Spiridovich, to exclaim: "The Tiflis robbery was the most grandiose ever attempted and succeeded because of the remarkable audacity of its planning," but it brought on Lenin's head the full wrath of his old-time colleagues. No doubt the adverse effect of this criticism was considerably lightened by the comfortable reflection that the Bolshevik centre was now able to launch great plans which had hitherto been held up for lack of money.

In arriving at a balanced judgment on the policy of "expropriations" it is difficult to avoid admiring the heorism and almost religious selflessness of men of the stamp of Kamo, but the opponents of the idea were not short of examples in which much less worthy individuals were employed.

Trotsky and Martov, in their attacks upon Lenin for the new policy, made much of the scandalous example of a Bolshevik named Victor, who, according to them, went to live with a rich bourgeois woman much older than himself in order to obtain her fortune for the use of the Party. When her heirs took legal action to prevent this chicanery, the cavalier replied by threatening to import a number of his Caucasian acquaintances to "persuade" the aggrieved litigants to change their minds.

A much better authenticated example is provided by the episode of the forged notes. It appears that an investigation instituted by the Berlin Reichsbank into the source of a sudden influx of forged notes, revealed that the bills were made on paper purchased in Finland by the ubiquitous Krassin, whose methods as a Financial Secretary, if unorthodox, were unquestionably successful.

Bitter controversy raged around this question of whether the "expropriations" were justifiable and many accusations were unjustly levelled against Lenin, who quite openly defended those "exes" which had been undertaken by order of the Central Committee. Such steps in a responsible politician seem at this distance to be almost grotesque, but if it is remembered that much of the Middle Ages still remained in Russia in the first years of the twentieth century, the picture falls into better perspective.

Stalin, while naturally not publicizing his part in these affairs, has never attempted to shift the responsibility; Kamo was his very close friend until his death. Much of what has been said about the "lack of morality" of the Bolsheviks gives evidence of a mental narrowness and inability to appreciate the real reasons for the lawlessness which was admittedly used. Lenin, Stalin, Krassin and many a hundred others gained nothing for themselves from the escapades of their subordinates. Kamo allowed his comrades a mere fifty kopeks a day. Their whole lives were governed by the hope that, by their efforts, a new and better system should sweep the Romanovs into oblivion. Who will lightly condemn the steps they took to achieve that end? Lenin himself summed up the position with admirable fairness: "The man who is afraid to soil the whiteness of his hands should not go into politics."

During the years of reaction following upon 1905, Stalin may be said to have won for himself a universally recognized reputation and to have laid the foundations of his later rise to a leading position in the Party. In one of his many embittered polemics against Stalin, Trotsky has since sought to prove that his rival's name was unknown to the Russian masses until long after the successful 1917 Revolution. Trotsky's purpose in this slander is to infer that Stalin owed his advance to wire-pulling and back-stage tactics, rather than to proven ability. Detailed study of the period 1906 to 1914 effectively gives the lie to the accusation, which could never have been made at all but for the fact that from 1913 to 1917 Stalin was prevented from adding to his fame because he was in prison and under the strictest possible surveillance.

Shortly after the 1905 Revolution Stalin met Lenin for the second time in London. At this conference, he represented the Caucasian Bolshevik group and was deputed to deliver to the Congress an account of local conditions there, together with an outline of the Party's activities. Trotsky was also present, attending rather on sufferance as an unregenerate Menshevik. Stalin took very careful note of the shrill attacks which Trotsky persisted in levelling against Lenin, to whom, in the words of the perfervid orator, "all the divisions in the Party are due."

Fresh from personal contact with Lenin, Stalin immediately returned to the Caucasus and work, leaving Trotsky to strut among the *émigré* intellectuals who abounded in every European capital, inveighing against the "arch-squabbler Lenin." The Bolshevik press in Baku and Tiflis was vastly improved and the technical arrangements for obtaining illegal material from Lenin were stringently tightened against the certain repression which was clearly approaching. These activities brought Stalin many devoted friends, but they also produced an occasional bitter enemy who considered himself injured by the frank and uncompromising criticisms which were administered by the returned leader without fear or favour.

In 1908 labour troubles in Tiflis set the police once more on the track

of the principal organizer. Again Stalin faced a Czarist magistrate and defended his opinions in open court; again he heard sentence pronounced, "eighteen months in Baku gaol, eighteen months in administrative exile in the northern province of Vologda."

Prison had long ago ceased to hold any terrors for Stalin, who offered the perfect example of how a revolutionary should conduct himself in such conditions. To the western mind, this constant preoccupation with imprisonment and exile is not easy to understand; to the professional revolutionary, facing the certainty of long periods of incarceration, it presented very serious problems. So prominent had the question become, that Lenin prepared a series of letters to be sent to young and inexperienced comrades in gaol, enjoining them to devote their time to study of economic theory or to writing on political subjects. "Avoid inactivity, for when a man allows himself to become utterly bored with prison life he is most likely to weaken and lose faith in his cause" was the theme of these remarkable missives. While confined at Baku, Stalin resumed his old routine of proselytising and study, making the most of all opportunities to gain assistants against the time he should return to his interrupted work.

As regards this particular confinement we are more fortunate than usual, for a fellow prisoner, the Menshevik Mereschak, in a book attacking Bolshevism, makes detailed mention of Stalin's tactics in gaol. Vereschak condemns Stalin because he refused to limit himself to association with the other politicals, preferring to maintain friendly relations with all the prisoners, including many convicted of robbery, forgery and other crimes. Perhaps if the hyper-moral Vereschak had been aware of the inner facts of the Tiflis and other expropriations, he would not have been quite so amazed at the activities of his subject.

In the same book we find a striking passage showing one more facet of Stalin's character. It appears that a new company of soldiers arrived to act as temporary guards at the Baku gaol and began their work by compelling the despised "politicals" to run the gauntlet of two lines of soldiers who belaboured the unfortunate men with rifle butts. "When it came to the turn of Koba Djughashvili, he walked slowly down the line, his eyes fixed on a book. Not one of the soldiers struck him." Even the critical Vereschak felt compelled to pay tribute to the personal courage of an adversary.

Late in 1909, following the usual escape, this time from Solvychigodsk in Vologda province, Stalin arrived in St. Petersburg and spent a busy month renewing old contacts and collecting information from this clearing-house between the Caucasus and Krassin. Six weeks later we find him doggedly returning to his old haunts in Baku and the oil fields. The interlude was short-lived; in March, 1910, as a result of information laid against him by one of the many *agents provocateurs* who abounded in the movement, he was again arrested and immediately sent back to Solvychigodsk to finish his unexpired term and to serve an additional three years for the escape.

So the old familiar round continued and the items in the Czarist police dossiers grew interminably; the magistrate at this latest investigation adding an illuminating comment of his own: "Insolent, proud and disrespectful to the authorities." By January, 1911, he had once more escaped, but he was already too well known in Batoum and Tiflis to evade recapture for

any length of time. During 1911 he was re-arrested twice and twice succeeded in eluding his guards, on the latter occasion causing some surprise as one of the few who had succeeded in escaping from the penal settlement at Narym.

1912 opened in a more hopeful key, each month producing further proof that the long period of ebb was drawing to a close. For Stalin personally, 1912 also brought a most welcome decision. In February of that year Lenin proposed to the Bolshevik leaders in session abroad, that they recognize the devotion and achievements of Stalin by co-opting him on to the Central Committee. The news of his election reached Stalin a month later and stimulated him to even greater effort.

Once more the stupidity of the weak-willed Czar played into the hands of the revolutionaries by instituting a massacre resembling that terrible "Bloody Sunday" of 1905. The factory workers of Lena were demonstrating in orderly fashion against wage cuts and the dismissal of certain of their most trusted leaders. The crowd was gathering round an improvised platform to hear a Bolshevik speaker when mounted Cossacks rode into the square. Refusal to disperse immediately became a signal for one more example of official brutality and several workers were killed and injured.

The effect of these periodic outbursts on the part of the Government was to set a spur to the working class movement as a whole. The crushing of one demonstration at Lena provided the signal for a hundred more vigorous protests which assumed serious proportions in Kazan and Voronezh.

In April the Bolshevik party took advantage of the sharp rise in working class activity to launch in St. Petersburg a legal newspaper, *Pravda* (the Truth), which was eventually to become the official organ of the Soviet Government. For the first few months of the paper's existence Stalin played a leading part in its direction until it had developed sufficiently to stand on its own feet. Using the experience gained with the Tiflis *Dro* and the *Baku Proletarian*, he was the only party leader living in Russia who was fitted for the task. One of his principal assistants on the early *Pravda* was Molotov, who still remains his close friend and associate.

On May 1st, 1912, clear proof of the new upsurge was provided by an unprecedented wave of industrial outbreaks, in which the trained agents of Bolshevism played an increasingly important part. As a result of his close connection with Stalin, Lenin was kept abreast of these new developments and began to adjust the Party tactics to the improved situation. In interesting contrast, Trotsky failed to sense the new tempo and considered the prospects of early revolution so remote as to be not worth immediate attention. In a fit of despondency he took a job with a capitalist newspaper in Kiev and was sent to Constantinople and the Balkans as its war correspondent. Stalin, closer to the workers, was convinced that important events were in the offing, and in order to obtain his leader's advice on the most recent developments he attended the sessions of the Central Committee, which was now meeting just across the frontier in Cracow in order to be nearer the scene of any possible action.

Further honours were conferred upon him here; Lenin agreed that events were moving so rapidly that the *émigré* Central Committee might find itself acting as a brake upon the initiative of the Party if it retained in its own hands the entire direction of policy. To avoid this possibility

it was decided to delegate the immediate tactical direction of the struggle within Russia to an "executive bureau," of which the principal figures were Stalin and his countryman, Sergo Ordjonikidze. Except for major strategic decisions, Lenin voluntarily handed over control of the Party's work within Russia to the "wonderful Georgian." With what impressive results was soon to be made clear.

In accordance with his desire to equip every leading comrade, both practically and theoretically, for the coming campaign, Lenin handed to Stalin a few brief note-headings for a suggested study on the question of the subject Nationalities which formed such a large part of the Czar's dominions. Stalin's researches into this problem appeared as a series of articles in the Party review, *Prosvyeshchenye*, and have since been collected and published under the heading "Marxism and the National Question"; as such they are used as a text-book in Soviet schools on the Marxist attitude to this complex problem.

Stalin had no sooner returned to Russia from the Cracow Conference than a further outburst of the long dormant revolutionary spirit occurred in the Caucasus, demanding his immediate presence there. The State Security Police, however, were well aware, not only of his earlier career, but also of his recent rise to high position in the Party; in an effort to remove all potential leaders of any future uprising they decided to lop off the head of the Russian section of the Party by gaoling its responsible leader.

In February, 1913, Stalin received his last sentence at the hands of the Imperial Power: six years of exile under the strictest surveillance. This was very much different from his former terms, and a few weeks only were enough to convince him that all hopes of escape this time were gone. For the next three years, until the February revolution broke his fetters, Stalin lived in a hamlet of six huts situated near Turukhansk, twenty miles inside the Arctic circle. Existence under such conditions would have tested even Stalin's resources to the full had he not been fortunate enough to find there none other than Sverdlov, close friend of Krassin and respected by Lenin. The two spent the days in hunting and the evenings in discussion, eagerly waiting for the signal of revolt in Russia. At Lenin's request two attempts were made to secure the escape of Stalin and Sverdlov, both failing after being betrayed to the Okhrana by a spy working among the Bolshevik Party.

During the year following Stalin's arrest the tide of proletarian struggle flowed on apace. Lenin was openly discussing plans for widespread action against the regime when almost in a night, the whole left movement was thrust back into depression and momentary impotence.

A bullet destroyed a Hapsburg prince in Sarajevo; a "Knight in Shining Armour" rode out of Potsdam and the Czar's armies found themselves locked in struggle against the forces of the Kaiser.

### CHAPTER III

## WAR—REVOLUTION—WAR

THE EFFECT OF THE OUTBREAK OF WAR ON THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY BECAME evident at once. The crescendo of working-class activity throughout 1912 and 1913 failed to survive the first shots and was replaced by a patriotic

reaction which sought to unite all parties behind the Imperial throne against the German aggressor.

It is customary nowadays to take the view that the Great War was largely responsible for the outbreak of the October Revolution because it drove the working class to such straits that open revolt was the only possible avenue of escape. Though having some basis in fact, this view is only partially justified, for the simple reason that it ignores the rôle of the Bolshevik Party and makes the revolution nothing more than a blind outburst against an unpopular central authority. In any event, to the Party members, August 1914 ushered in the period of their greatest struggles, placing them in a position which was so disadvantageous that their eventual disintegration for lack of support seemed a matter of months.

Under the influence of the French Socialist, Jules Guesde and the Menshevik, Plehanov, the great majority of the European Socialist parties adopted an attitude which compelled them to support the war. Guesde and his adherents argued that the war aims and motives of the Allies were more progressive than the purely predatory desires of the Central Powers, and that, because of this unquestioned fact, the Socialists should assist in the defeat of Germany by supporting the Allies and avoiding any industrial activities likely to hinder the Ententes' prosecution of the war. In every European country, the Socialist deputies voted in support of their Government's request for war credits, with only two exceptions.

In the Berlin Reichstag, Karl Liebknecht opposed the war and heroically proclaimed his famous slogan: "The greatest enemy of every workman is to be found in his own country." Nevertheless, in the subsequent voting it was decided to make the necessary credit grants, Liebknecht himself providing the solitary opposing vote.

In Russia also the half-dozen Bolshevik representatives voted against the war credits. Trotsky, as usual, took up a stand differing from both Plehanov and Lenin. In the Menshevik press of the period, Trotsky's view was given full expression and his slogans were accepted by considerable numbers of the less-experienced members. "The war was definitely wrong," according to Trotsky; "the working class should not support it but should call for an immediate peace without territorial adjustments." What the working class was to do when the warring governments continued the struggle in spite of polite requests for immediate peace, was not quite plain to the supporters of Trotsky, whose policy was clearly an attempt at avoiding at one stroke the necessity of either actively supporting the war or actively opposing it.

In complete contrast to the other two sections, Lenin placed his policy before the Bolsheviks in a series of articles, since collected under the title "War and the Second International." The arguments of the Plehanov faction as to which of the combatants had most right on his side were immediately placed out of court by the assertion that "it is not the duty of a revolutionary party to assess the comparative guilt of the Imperialist powers, nor, if they do assess it, can they constitute themselves the unofficial advisers of one side or the other." According to Lenin the war was fundamentally a struggle by the Entente to defend its privileged position in world economy against the Kaiser's attempt to wrest those privileges away by force of arms. Seizing upon Liebknecht's formula, "the enemy



is in your own country," the Bolshevik leader developed the point still further, seeking to prove that since the principal enemy of the Russian workers was the Czar, their task should be to take advantage of the fact that their enemy had his hands tied, to make increased attacks upon the government. To the objection that in so doing he was indirectly assisting the reactionary aims of Prussian militarism, Lenin replied that his plan represented "the lesser of two evils."

Although he did not at this stage give it open expression, he had already reached the conclusion that if the principal object of the Bolshevik Party was to seize the governmental authority, it would stand a far better chance if it faced a regime suffering from the discontent and disorganization caused by defeat in war, than a central authority which had just won a series of victories.

Stalin also, in his Turukhansk exile, had not forgotten the lessons of 1905, when loyal troops succeeded in smashing the revolution. His fellow exile, Shumiatsky, tells how "he hunted and fished alone, equipped with a variety of nets, hawks, guns, traps, snares and baskets, cutting wood and cooking his own food. But in spite of all this he found time to work on his writings." According to Shumiatsky, Stalin took up an extreme defeatist position immediately he heard of the beginning of hostilities, long before he could have been aware of Lenin's position on the subject.

It is the general fashion among Stalin's official biographers to give him little credit for original thinking, probably because their subject himself invariably insists: "I am only the interpreter of Leninism," "I followed the directives laid down first by Comrade Lenin." On the rare occasions where we can test the reactions of the two men to the same set of circumstances before they have had time to compare conclusions, it invariably turns out that Stalin was not behind his leader in thinking out a line for himself; his policy subsequently proved on every occasion to be confirmed by the decision of Lenin.

Perusal of those articles which have survived from his writings in Turukhansk shows that their author's distaste for the methods and the personality of Trotsky was not dimmed since their last clash. In one of these he suggests with some truth that as a result of the years spent in pretending to stand above the Party squabbles, Trotsky had become congenitally incapable of sharing anyone else's position but must at all costs differentiate himself from all other groups. In view of the fact that Trotsky had adopted such a pointless stand on the war question, this suggestion is perhaps the most charitable of all.

From 1914 to late 1916, Stalin was able to keep the small focal centres of Bolshevism going in the factories by means of a series of short letters expressing, in a simple but direct manner, those ideas which Lenin later set out in his book, *Against the Current*. The full benefits which the movement derived from Stalin's achievements became evident as soon as the patriotic tide began to turn.

By 1917, rather more than nineteen million men had been mobilized in the Russian Army, roughly 23 per cent of the entire male population. The economic resources of the country were, however, totally incapable of adequately supplying the needs of a force of such magnitude, and as a result at least half the total strength did not even possess a rifle. New recruits went through the motions of drilling and fighting only, and were kept in outlying provinces, rotting in inactivity, until the opening of a new

gap in the Russian positions necessitated their being flung into action to make good the reverses. Many such soldiers had their first practical experience of a rifle when moving up to the front line. Although compelled to face weather conditions of exceptional severity, equipment and stores were of poor quality and replacements were impossible to obtain, while in striking contrast to the shocking privation of the men, the Czarist officers enjoyed every comfort.

A series of defeats at the hands of the German Armies merely served to aggravate the discontent among the Russian soldiers by exposing still more clearly the incompetence of their military leaders and the indifference of the Government. To make matters worse, conditions in the country were little better than at the front, and the great mass of the soldiery were growing increasingly restless and anxious for the welfare of their families at home.

As if to goad even its supporters to action, the Imperial Court was notorious for its unbridled luxury and extravagance. The sexually deranged and drunken monk, Rasputin, exerted a complete dominance over the Empress and used his position to indulge in disgusting orgies reminiscent of the era of Rome's decline. The limited intellect of the Czar was not equal to the task of bringing order into chaos such as this in spite of the efforts of his more disinterested advisers who continually besought him to institute mild reforms as a palliative to the discontent which was daily becoming more dangerous. In a manner recalling the ill-fated Louis XVI of France a century and a half before, Nicholas spent the last months of his reign alternating between fits of weeping for the sorrows of his stricken country and outbursts of violent rage at what he was pleased to call the "cowardice of the common soldiers."

The few Liberal representatives sitting in the Duma made tentative suggestions designed to alleviate the general distress and reduce the uncontrolled speculation which was forcing the price of food beyond the reach of the labouring masses, but the Romanovs seemed unable to comprehend their own danger and persistently ignored all suggestion of reform.

From the beginning of 1917 matters rapidly came to a head. Petrograd and Moscow had undergone an exceptionally severe winter, during which food supplies had steadily worsened. In February the working women were growing heartily sick of the endless queues for a few ounces of black bread, rioting and looting were on the increase. In the same month the workers in the huge Putilov steelworks decided to strike as a gesture of solidarity with the rioters. The workman Alliluyev, later to become Stalin's father-in-law, maintained that this decision of the Putilov workmen was taken as a result of advice contained in one of Stalin's letters from Kurukhansk, a suggestion which seems very probable since the Bolshevik group in the factory had originally been constituted by one of Stalin's pupils from the Baku days.

Stupid as ever, the Czar ordered the Petrograd garrison out to restore order but the troops were now so thoroughly imbued with Bolshevik ideas that they flatly refused to fire on the crowds and ended by going over to the side of the workers. By this means the strikers obtained the one thing they had so far lacked, arms and an organized fighting force. The Putilov works soon took on the appearance of a fortified camp, until the immediate reaction of the other industrial centre made it clear that for the first time the Government and not the strikers was on the defensive.

From Moscow to Kazan, from the oil lands of the South and the mines of the Donetz valley came resounding echoes of events in Petrograd. A general strike was immediately proclaimed and spread into the outlying districts. The central authority found itself paralyzed by the speed and co-ordination of the movement.

Without friends and without defenders, the Imperial throne of the Romanovs, which had endured for three centuries, tottered and fell in less than a week. Nicholas II and the Royal Family were imprisoned and the weak-kneed Duma found itself compelled to constitute a Provisional Government, led first by a Liberal Aristocrat, Prince Lvov, and later by the lawyer Kerensky. The dissident French Communist, Souvarine, in discussing the revolution of February, 1917, quotes the remark of Benoit Malon on the Commune of 1871: "Never has revolution surprised the revolutionaries more," thereby ignoring the cumulative effect of the years of patient work carried out under Stalin's direction among the very people who organized the overthrow of the Czar.

It is admittedly true that neither Lenin in Geneva nor Stalin in Siberia issued the order to rise against the monarchy in the sense that they later controlled the October uprising, but the remarkable similarity and co-ordination between the revolutionaries of the various industrial cities can only be understood when we remember that each one possessed its own nucleus of Bolsheviks, trained according to one set of principles.

This view is rendered more probable by a study of the subsequent actions of Stalin, who promptly took advantage of the change in Government to leave Turukhansk *en route* for Petrograd, where his presence was urgently required. He was greeted on his arrival by his old collaborators, Molotov, Kalinin and Kamenev, in whose company he went straight to the Party headquarters to discuss plans for the future.

As a first step he resumed his editorship of the Party Organ, *Pravda*, and began to present the Bolshevik policy through its pages. Unable to wait for Lenin's opinions on the best line to follow, Stalin began by explaining that the defeat of Czarism was only a first step, much still remained to be done. He characterized the Provisional Government as a collection of bourgeois Liberals without real support among the common people or a definite programme, and demanded a series of widespread reforms.

Fully aware that the more backward elements of the Russian people, principally the peasants, were not yet ready for a Soviet Government, the directors of *Pravda* set about a twofold task. On the one hand they demanded of the Lvov-Kerensky Government an unequivocal statement of policy, and at the same time indicated the main points in the Bolshevik Party's programme of Radical legislation.

In spite of the changes of Government, strikes and demonstrations increased in number as the working classes waited impatiently for the benefits they expected from the Liberal administration. Kerensky issued one decree after another from his headquarters at the Winter Palace, promising greater and greater reforms to be implemented at some distant date, but carefully refrained from actually doing anything.

The Central Committee of the Mensheviks, whose programme differed from Kerensky's only on points of detail, published endless appeals and advice to the insurgent proletariat. The cumulative effect was summarized

at the time by one observer, who remarked: "Having ceased to distinguish the thunderings of the Central Committee from the lightnings of Kerensky, the workers and soldiers conveniently ignored them both."

On April 3rd the situation took on a new aspect with the arrival of Lenin in Petrograd, after his adventurous journey through Germany in the famous "sealed train." Any hopes Kerensky may have entertained, that the arrival of their acknowledged leader would result in a toning down of the Bolshevik demands as drawn up by Stalin, were rudely dispelled. For the next week *Pravda* issued the series of short articles by Lenin called "the April Theses," in which he approved the Party tactics and called for still more vigorous methods against the Provisional Government.

Remembering the 1905 rehearsal, Lenin began the systematic education of the small Petrograd Soviet, with a view to using it as the future instrument of Communist rule. The Bolshevik section was reinforced by the addition of Zinoviev (whose oratorical gifts could be used there to advantage) and encouraged to take over, as much as possible, the direction of the city's affairs. Shortly after Lenin's return Trotsky also arrived from America, having been delayed in Newfoundland by the British. Although his non-Bolshevik past rankled among many of the leading figures in the Party, it was decided that his energy and ability to inspire crowds would be useful in the conditions then prevailing.

As a result of the policy laid down in the "April Theses," the Bolsheviks opened their campaign for the winning of complete power by advancing the slogan, "Peace, Land and Bread," embracing in comprehensive fashion the wishes of the lower classes. "Peace and Land," the inmost desire of millions of peasant soldiers, stretched over the thousand-mile battle front, was deliberately incorporated into the programme of the Party in order to make clear its own identification with the working class.

In face of so concrete a proposal, Kerensky had nothing to offer except nebulous promises couched in extravagant language. This obvious sign of their increasing power led some of the Party leaders to demand that they should at once attempt to seize power. Trotsky, impetuous as usual, was prominent in expressing this view.

Sure of Lenin's approval, Stalin undertook to refute the demand in *Pravda* by demonstrating that the working class was still untrained in the art of Government, because the Soviets were still in their infancy. According to Stalin, the Bolsheviks were in a position to overthrow Kerensky immediately, but their chances of holding on to power once they had grasped it was a much more difficult problem because the soldiers were not yet ripe for revolt.

In defiance of this clear warning, the hotheads attempted a coup in July, ostensibly as a protest against Kerensky's plan to begin an offensive on the Galician front against the Central Powers. The move was unsuccessful and resulted in the imprisonment of Trotsky and his supporters.

Luckily for the Party, its two principal representatives managed to evade the blow, Lenin by escaping into Finland and Stalin by submerging himself among the working class of Petrograd. From July 6th to October 25th, on the very eve of the revolution, Lenin was forced to remain outside Russia and the practical guidance of the Party again devolved on Stalin who alone maintained contact with the Party leader

A month after the "July Insurrection" the Czarist General, Kornilov, made his attempt to overthrow the Provisional Government and restore the Monarchy. This presented a serious problem for Stalin. Whether to use Kerensky's preoccupation with the new menace, to take over control of the State, or whether to support him against the even more reactionary Kornilov?

He solved the difficulty by giving Kerensky the assistance he required, at the price of certain important concessions beneficial to the Bolsheviks. The imprisoned July leaders were released on bail, while the need for defence against the advancing Cossacks was seized as a means of forcing the reluctant Government to arm the working classes, who then proceeded to organize their own militias on a factory basis and apart from the Regular Army formations.

The Provisional Government watched this process with growing apprehension, but without Stalin's support it was clearly impossible to prevent the reintroduction of the Monarchy and there was, therefore, no alternative but to acquiesce.

As soon as the danger from Kornilov was removed, Kerensky began to look about him for means to discredit the Bolsheviks in the eyes of the masses. Before doing this, however, he deemed it wisest to remove the Petrograd garrison, which was openly Bolshevik, and replace it with regiments whose loyalty could be relied upon.

In taking this step the Provisional Government merely accelerated its own dissolution. In order to disguise his real motive, Kerensky instructed his General Staff to demand the release of the Petrograd garrison in order to defend the approaches to the city, but, unfortunately for his schemes, the representative of the Kronstadt sailors, Dybenko, was present when the Soviet discussed the proposal.

A full report of the incident was given by Stalin some years later at a reunion of old comrades, at which he said: "When the official spokesman had carefully explained that the Petrograd garrison was urgently required to defend Reval and the roads leading to the town, Dybenko got up and told the meeting that the Soviet of the Kronstadt sailors was so powerful that the Admiral asked them whether they intended to support him in a naval operation. The sailor's reply was: 'Yes, but only under our supervision, and do not forget that if we see any sign of treachery the whole officer staff will be hanged from the masthead.' 'As for the necessity of defending Reval,' went on Dybenko, 'don't believe a word of it. We will guarantee to defend Reval if you will stay in Petrograd and defend the interests of the Revolution.' In face of such solidarity, Kerensky hurriedly dropped his proposals against the Petrograd garrison."

Signs such as these were becoming frequent, so that when Stalin crossed into Finland to consult Lenin, they were mutually agreed that the time for the actual seizure of the reins of Government was not far off.

Several minor details remained to be accomplished and Lenin therefore advised that the Party should use the next few weeks to perfect its organization and allot the various subordinate tasks.

One section of the Petrograd garrison, comprising three Cossack regiments and one armoured division, was expected to support Kerensky, so that to ensure a speedy victory, an organized military force would be needed when the actual insurrection began. With special orders to prepare

for this eventuality, the Party appointed a Military Revolutionary Centre, consisting of Stalin, Sverdlov, Bubnov, Uritsky and Dzerzhinsky, placing in its hands the entire military direction of the rising. Once more Lenin's choice fell upon the "wonderful Georgian" when he needed organizing ability and tactical sense.

In making out his plan of campaign Stalin departed from the clandestine policies of former days and carried out his manoeuvres in full view, believing that the dangers arising out of letting the enemy know his plans would be more than balanced by the support which could be gained from the workers, when once they were fully aware what was being attempted.

On his instructions special efforts were made to recruit the thousands of deserters from the Army who were flocking into the cities in ever increasing numbers. According to the confidential report sent by the Commander-in-Chief, General Dukhonin, to Kerensky, the effective strength of the Army had fallen by approximately eleven million men, comprising two million deserters, two million dead, five million wounded and two million prisoners. This report was dated August, 1917, and the number of deserters was multiplying with every passing day.

To this tremendous reserve of disillusioned soldiers, *Pravda* issued a series of appeals, addressing them as "Deserter Comrades." Stalin impressed upon them that only the Bolshevik Party was pledged to obtain an immediate peace, and therefore their support of an armed uprising would be a means of putting an end to the unbearable horror of the war.

As a result of appeals of this nature, coupled with a campaign in the factories for the formation of squads of "Red Guards," the Military Revolutionary Committee very soon had more than a sufficiency of men, but it possessed no arms except those of its soldier members.

Once more Stalin decided to take the boldest course. He summoned the Bolshevik delegates from the principal arms factory in Petrograd and handed them a written requisition for five thousand rifles on behalf of the Petrograd Soviet. The order was presented to the management by an aggressive delegation of five hundred workmen—the rifles were delivered the same day.

In a last despairing attempt to escape from the ring which was so obviously closing round him, Kerensky decided to shut down the Bolshevik newspaper *Pravda*, only to find its premises defended by a company of the Litovsky Regiment which had paraded as a result of a request addressed by Stalin to its commissar.

In contrast to these carefully planned preparations, the Provisional Government was visibly disintegrating. Decrees still poured out of the Winter Palace, as Kerensky promised far-reaching reforms and exhorted the proletariat not to follow the lead of the Bolsheviks, whom he did not hesitate to vilify as "paid agents of the Kaiser."

Whatever troops he thought could still be relied upon were urgently requested from the Commander-in-Chief, who replied in justifiable exasperation, that he had not enough men to defend his own positions against the Germans.

Baron Budberg, a reactionary high in the councils of Kerensky, described the situation graphically in a letter to a European acquaintance: "The Kerenskyists and the many coloured revolutionists of the ancient and

the February type feel their end approaching and chirp and chatter on all sides, reminding one of the Mussulman who tried to stop an eclipse of the moon with a rattle."

Little now remained to be done save to set the actual date of revolt. From his Finnish retreat, Lenin tentatively suggested October 10th, subject to modification according to circumstances, but Stalin considered October 25th as the best choice and this latter date was accepted by the military committee.

One further danger existed, namely that the Commander-in-Chief at the front might attempt to support the tottering regime of Kerensky by detaching forces from the armies nearest to Petrograd and employing them against the Revolution. Although Dukhonin was no admirer of Kerensky, he was a violent opponent of the Bolshevik's avowed intention to sign an immediate peace with Germany and so put an end to hostilities.

To get rid of this possibility, the Petrograd Soviet relied upon Stalin's opinion, that for the Party to declare to the soldiers that their commander alone stood in the way of an armistice, would be sufficient to cause them to remove the offending officer without delay.

Stalin's own description of this event is quoted by Henri Barbusse in his book *Staline* as follows: "I remember the day on which Lenin, Krylenko and I went to the General Headquarters in Petrograd to speak to Dukhonin over a special wire. It was a terrible moment . . . Dukhonin and the Headquarters Staff refused categorically to carry out the orders of the Council of People's Commissars. The Army Commanders were completely in the hands of the General Staff. And what of the soldiers? No one knew what the Army would say, subjected as it was to organizations which were utterly opposed to the Soviets. We knew that a Junker rising was brewing in Petrograd and that Kerensky was threatening to attack. I remember how, after a moment's silence before the telephone, Lenin's face lit up in the most extraordinary way. One could see that he had already come to a decision. 'We will go to the wireless station,' he said. 'It will serve our purpose well. We will relieve General Dukhonin of his duties by special order, and in his place we will appoint Comrade Krylenko as Commander-in-Chief; and we will appeal to the soldiers, over the heads of their leaders, to arrest their generals, to cease all military operations, to fraternize with the Austro-German troops, and to take the cause of peace in their own hands.' The moment this step was taken Kerensky's last possibility of escape disappeared."

Stalin's final arrangements were now put into motion. A force of soldiers and Red Guards, led by Antonov-Evseenko, received their orders to take the seat of Government, the Winter Palace of the ex-Czar, on the afternoon of October 25th.

News of this decision had already reached Kerensky, causing him to call a hurried meeting. At two o'clock in the morning on the 25th, the last hope of the Russian reactionaries resigned his office and, commandeering an automobile flying the American flag, drove out of Petrograd shortly after dawn.

Trotsky paints an ironic picture of the tinsel ruler who never won the allegiance of a single Russian, driving into exile: "'It is needless to say,' says Kerensky, 'that the whole street—both passers-by and soldiers—immediately recognized me. I saluted as always, a little carelessly and with

an easy smile.' Incomparable picture! Carelessly and smiling the February regime passed into the Kingdom of Shades."

With Kerensky gone, further resistance was pointless. The Cossack regiments which had been assembled to defend the Winter Palace laid down their arms and were permitted to leave without molestation. Of the army of millions he had ostensibly commanded, only a single battalion of women soldiers remained to defend what was left of the Kerensky regime.

Although this resistance was soon overcome, there was something fitting about their devotion to the well-meaning but indecisive lawyer whom fate had jostled into a position to which his abilities gave him no real claim. On such an ignominious note ended the interlude which, in later times the Bolsheviks contemptuously called the "Kerenskiad."

In its campaign against the provisional Government, the Bolshevik Party had been compelled deliberately to destroy the effectiveness of the old Army, lest it be used against them in 1917 as it had been in 1905. Their principal appeal in this direction had centred round an unequivocal promise to put an end to the war. Following upon Lenin's appeal to the soldiers to overthrow their officers, mass desertions had become a common phenomenon; whole battalions, even whole regiments, left the section of the line they were supposed to be defending and set off for home.

In such a context the question of an immediate peace was forced upon the Bolsheviks, many of whom would have preferred to defer such a difficult decision until a later date.

The moment the Party leaders began to discuss the question, it became obvious that serious divergences of view existed as to exactly what course to take. Three different plans were put forward, afterwards described in the usual political terminology as Right, Centre, and Left.

On the extreme right a group of younger and less experienced members, led by Buharin and Radek, were in favour of refusing to make any concessions to German Imperialism, preferring to stake everything on an appeal to the Russian people to resist the invaders to the last breath. This point of view, though full of what Stalin described as "youthful romanticism and blindness to reality," gained some support because it opposed the indignity of having to bow before the detested Prussian war machine. In the opposite camp Lenin, Stalin, and Sverdlov pointed out that any plan which did not provide for an immediate cessation of hostilities was doomed in advance because, whether the Party liked it or not, the Army definitely would not continue fighting. In the light of this opinion the resounding revolutionary phraseology of the Buharin faction became so much hot air.

Speaking at the meeting of the Central Committee which debated the question, Stalin insisted that Lenin's position was the only possible course open to the Party and should be accepted without a moment's delay, because if peace were not signed immediately, the already demoralized Army would disintegrate completely and the German peace terms would grow correspondingly more harsh.

Between the two opposing groups Trotsky propagated an alternative course of "neither peace nor war," by which the Bolsheviks were to open negotiations with the Germans and spin out the preliminary discussions as long as possible, without ever actually signing the Treaty.

In the meantime, according to Trotsky, there was every possibility that the German Government would be faced with a revolution of its own and



would thus be unable to enforce its will upon the Soviet. As usual with Trotsky's schemes, the suggestion seemed plausible enough and had the additional factor to recommend it, that it could be accepted as a compromise by both the Lenin and Buharin sections, thus avoiding the danger of a serious split. The only dissenting voice was Stalin, who reiterated that any other policy except one of immediate peace at any price would result in disaster.

The majority, however, decided to send Trotsky to Brest Litovsk to begin negotiations with the representative of the Kaiser, General Max Hoffmann, a Prussian Junker of the worst variety. In dealing with a person like Hoffmann, the Trotsky plan was soon exposed.

The German delegates flatly refused to enter into any long-winded arguments; they merely presented the Bolsheviks with a series of demands, failure to accept which would result in a German offensive against Petrograd. Within twenty-four hours of delivering this ultimatum, General Hoffmann ordered his troops to move into Russia.

In Petrograd the sudden turn of affairs and the ease with which the Germans were advancing caused a change of viewpoint. At the eleventh hour Trotsky received telegraphed orders, signed by Lenin and Stalin, that the German terms must be accepted in their entirety.

Once more, if further proof were needed, the correctness of Lenin's judgment had been vindicated, although in this instance the yells of execration which the Allied Governments let out, caused the Bolsheviks to become even less popular than they were before Brest Litovsk.

Events had reduced Trotsky's elaborate schemes to so many empty words but not until they had done serious damage. While he was vainly trying to inveigle General Hoffmann into long-drawn-out discussions, the German armies had begun to move into Russia through the rich grain lands of the Ukraine, where they were welcomed by the Ukrainian Nationalists who were trying to set up a separate state outside the Soviet rule.

The quick success of this manoeuvre and the obvious fact that the Russian Army was incapable of serious resistance caused the German High Command to weigh the possibilities of large-scale intervention in Russia as a means of obtaining easy territorial gains to offset the defeats they were suffering on the Western Front.

Viewed from this angle, Trotsky's error of judgment was to a great extent the cause of the Civil War and the Allied intervention which plunged Russia into miseries never before endured by any nation.

Feeling secure behind the bayonets of Hoffmann's Germans, the Ukrainian "Rada" issued a call to the Cossacks of the Don to assist them in the overthrow of Bolshevism. General Kaledin collected considerable numbers of officers and men of the old Army and began to march from the Don valley in the direction of Kiev, there to effect a juncture with the Ukrainian forces. Cossack volunteer formations in the Urals followed Kaledin's lead and the first serious campaign of the Civil War began.

Unable to count on the regular Army, now in process of being disbanded, the Bolsheviks concentrated on rousing the workmen from the industrial centre of the Donetz basin, to resist the advancing Cossack detachments.

From Petrograd the Military Revolutionary Committee, on Stalin's recommendation, sent one of its ablest soldiers, the same Antonov Ovsechenko who had conducted the siege of the Winter Palace in October, to drive a

wedge between the Ukrainians and the Don Cossacks. Acting with speed and energy Antonov defeated the army of Kaledin first, and then turned west against the Rada. After a few weeks' desultory fighting, Kiev was occupied, and the Rada disbanded, and replaced by an Ukrainian Soviet.

As a result of this quick success, by March, 1918, the Bolshevik party found itself supreme in almost the whole of the Russian Empire.

The lessons of the initial German attempt had not gone unnoticed among the Great Powers. Intervention was already the subject of serious discussion among the Allies, whose success depended upon keeping the German Army occupied on two fronts at once.

A more urgent note was imparted to these debates by the return of General Hoffmann with a much larger force, charged with the annexation of the Ukraine by Germany. Meeting with little opposition, the Germans re-occupied Kiev and installed General Skoropadsky as military governor.

Further disturbances occurred in May, the Czechoslovak Legion, comprising about 60,000 prisoners of war who had been released by the Bolsheviks, were told that the promise to repatriate them by way of Vladivostok could not be implemented because the port had been seized by the Japanese. Indignant at what they imagined to be a betrayed trust, the Czechs revolted and seized a number of important centres on the Trans-Siberian Railway, paralysing all traffic along that vital route.

This was the signal for new outbreaks among the Cossacks, who immediately took up arms under General Krasnov, who had been arrested by the Bolsheviks in 1917 and released on his promise never to bear arms against them. In sympathy with their compatriots, the Cossacks of the Kuban, a fertile steppe to the north of the Caucasus, also rose in revolt, choosing as their leader an ex-chief of the Czar's General Staff, General Denikin.

Such widespread indications of opposition to the Bolshevik regime finally decided the Entente Powers to pursue a policy of intervention in Russia, designed not only to overthrow Bolshevism, but also to open the tremendous potentialities of the Russian market to the industrial European nations.

Japanese armies moved from Vladivostok into Russia, taking control of a vast area, while French and British troops made open preparations to invade the country from the north.

The Soviet Government had virtually no armed forces with which to resist this unprovoked aggression but, heartened by the example of Antonov's earlier success in the Ukraine, an appeal was issued to all citizens to help in the defence of the Soviet Power. The result exceeded all expectations to such an extent that only a percentage of the volunteers could be adequately armed.

With such improvised forces, composed mainly of demobilized soldiers from the old Army and officered by ex-N.C.O.s, the Bolsheviks prepared to defend the October Revolution against the whole of Europe.

Because of his acknowledged success as a propagandist and his ability to inspire crowds, Trotsky was given the job of "Commissar for War," with complete power, subject to the approval of Lenin and Stalin. The drawbacks to this choice were very soon demonstrated.

With the idea of defending the centre of Russia as the most vital part of the Soviet regime, Trotsky ordered the immediate evacuation of the important town of Tsaritsyn, which meant that the whole of Southern

Russia would be surrendered without a struggle. Klementi Voroshilov, examiner and comrade of Stalin, who was in command at Tsaritsyn, promptly appealed to his old chief over Trotsky's head, demanding to be allowed to defend the city against the Don Cossacks of Denikin.

No time existed to discuss the question before the Central Committee, so Stalin, on his own initiative, instructed Voroshilov to ignore the order and defend the city. Furious at what he considered insubordination, Trotsky protested loudly to Lenin who endeavoured to smooth his ruffled vanity without countermmanding Stalin's instructions to Voroshilov.

It is true that the Soviet troops were eventually driven from Tsaritsyn and forced to retreat, but to achieve this success Denikin was obliged to conduct a hard campaign of several weeks' duration, during which he suffered much more heavily than the defenders, while the example of Tsaritsyn served to stimulate the local peasantry to guerilla action against the White Armies which were composed mainly of Cossacks, the traditional enemies of all sections of the Russian lower classes.

With the landing of French, British and American troops at the Northern port of Murmansk the Civil War took on a more serious aspect. Spasmodic and short-lived revolts against the Soviets were now united in pursuit of a common strategical plan, while arms and modern war equipment were bountifully distributed to all those who refused to accept the Soviet system.

By the end of May, 1918, only one-sixth of Russian territory was still under Bolshevik rule.

The general plan of the interventionists was extremely simple: their armies were to advance concentrically on Moscow and Petrograd, driving the Bolsheviks inwards until the time was opportune to finish them off altogether.

From the north-east, Admiral Kolchak was advancing with a mixed force comprising Russian volunteers, French and Japanese mercenaries, and the Czechoslovak Legion commanded by the 28-year-old General Gaïda. From the opposite direction, with the Ukrainian capital Kiev as his base, General Denikin planned a similar manoeuvre, while the small Franco-British force at Murmansk undertook a steady advance southwards. Between the converging fires the new Government seemed to have little chance of survival. Fortunately for Bolshevism, however, the unanimity of her opponents was more apparent than real, as events soon proved.

The shortage of arms compelled the Soviet to concentrate its whole attention upon defeating one opponent at a time, delaying the advance of the other two with small forces until the main armies were released to deal with them.

Led by the metal-worker Medvedyev, now better known as Marshal Blucher, a vigorous offensive began against the forces of Admiral Kolchak. Depending for provisions upon the friendly peasants, Marshal Blucher's armies advanced at an average speed of 13 kilometres a day and soon had the White forces on the run.

Rapid retreat brought to the surface the underlying weakness of a conglomerate army such as Kolchak's; dissensions between the different sections of his forces grew increasingly bitter until, as a result of a serious disagreement on tactics, General Gaïda withdrew the only homogeneous force the Whites possessed, the Czech Legion. In a fit of petulant rage Kolchak tore off the insignia of the Czech leader and began to mutter threats

of arrest. Gaïda's answer was characteristic, he mounted a machine-gun on each carriage of his armoured train and set off unmolested towards Vladivostok.

Having lost his only capable fighting force, Admiral Kolchak's fate was sealed. Preceded by a train carrying some sixty-two million pounds in gold, which he had captured some months before from the Soviet at Kazan, Kolchak followed his late allies eastward.

On January 3rd, 1920, news reached the Admiral that the next large town ahead, Irkutsk, was in Bolshevik hands, placing him between two fires. After a night spent in frantic communication with the Allied Council at Versailles, Kolchak telegraphed to General Janin, commanding the Czech garrison at Irkutsk, that he surrendered his gold to the Allies and desired a safe conduct for himself and his staff to Vladivostok.

By the time the fallen dictator reached Irkutsk some eight days later, the city was in the hands of a Bolshevik Soviet, whose troops surrounded the train demanding the Admiral's surrender. The remnants of the Czech garrison, commanded by the one-eyed General Sirovi, was presented with an ultimatum by the Soviet: "Surrender Kolchak or we will take him by force." Realizing that his subordinate was hopelessly outnumbered, Janin reluctantly telegraphed orders to surrender the one-time "Supreme Ruler" to the Bolshevik authorities. On February 7th, after a trial by the local Soviet, Admiral Kolchak and his Prime Minister, Pepelaiev, faced a firing squad, releasing one more Red Army for action on the Southern front, where a much graver threat was developing against the Soviet State.

Taking advantage of the preoccupation of the main Red Army with the pursuit and annihilation of Admiral Kolchak, his ally in the south, General Denikin had commenced a rapid advance in the direction of Moscow. The Soviet armies on this front were under the sole direction of Stalin and his immediate subordinates, Voroshilov and Minin. The campaign against Denikin therefore, serves as a practical illustration of his capacities in the military as well as the purely political sphere. We have already seen indications of his inspiring leadership in the heroic defence of Tsaritsyn in face of overwhelming odds; now he was to deal with a problem involving the fate, not only of one city, but of the whole of Soviet Russia.

Reinforced by sections of the victorious Siberian armies, Stalin and Voroshilov brought the advance of the Whites to a sudden halt and, as new divisions continued to arrive, the invader was slowly pushed back towards his base lines around Kiev.

As if to deny Stalin the victory he had so carefully planned, a new enemy appeared in the north. Having recruited a powerful army of White Russians, French and Poles, General Yudenich crossed the Estonian border into Russia and, finding no serious opposition, commenced an advance on Petrograd.

This presented Stalin with a cruel choice at which a lesser man would certainly have baulked; should he weaken his own forces by sending them against Yudenich or should he maintain his successful drive against Denikin? Lenin, tremendously impressed by his lieutenant's military successes, seriously advised the abandonment of Petrograd until such time as Stalin had liquidated Denikin, proposing to eject Yudenich at a later date.

This provoked the one recorded instance where Stalin opposed a decision of Lenin; he demanded that Petrograd be defended to the last as Tsaritsyn

had been defended a few months before. To assist in the defence of the city he undertook to detach half the effective strength of his own forces, leaving the remainder to resist Denikin's counter-offensive as best they might. He found an unexpected ally in this debate in Trotsky who, for once, made no secret of his admiration for what he termed "Stalin's revolutionary zeal."

In face of this unusual combination, and impressed by Stalin's disinterested loyalty in placing the saving of Petrograd before his own military requirements, Lenin yielded, even going so far as to defend Stalin's views at the meeting of the Soviet Commissars which discussed the problem. The Political Bureau was fully aware that its campaigns against the two White generals were interdependent and delegated full powers to Stalin and Trotsky to direct both.

In accordance with his earlier promise, Stalin sent a large force from the southern sector to check the advance on Petrograd. Though unable to defeat the numerically superior White forces, the Red troops succeeded in slowing down the tempo of the advance long enough to enable Trotsky to organize the civil population of the city into armed detachments of guerilla troops.

With a fanatical devotion which was openly admired by the numerous Allied Staff Officers serving under Yudenich, half-trained workmen hastily manned an improvised defence line barely thirty miles from the beleaguered city. From his field headquarters Yudenich could distinguish the buildings of Petrograd, but he was destined to come no nearer.

Reinforced by the mass of volunteers, the Soviet forces slowly pressed the enemy back along the road of his former advance. Bands of guerillas, working under the orders of the Military Executive Committee, gnawed into the White lines of communication and rendered transport so difficult that the ex-Czarist general found it impossible to feed his troops adequately, let alone maintain his positions.

To add to his discomfiture, divisions soon appeared among the heterogeneous elements of the army, which, although it never exceeded 70,000 men, included no less than fifty-three full generals of the old Army, each expecting to have a separate command. As the retreat quickened to a rout, the White armies disintegrated before the Bolsheviks. Yudenich himself just managed to scurry back into Esthonia less than a fortnight after gazing on the distant spires of Petrograd. In such decisive fashion was Stalin's strategic wisdom justified in action.

In the south, however, the breathing space offered by Yudenich's diversion, though brief, had been sufficient to allow Denikin to advance once more in the direction of Moscow, compelling Stalin to begin his campaign all over again. In the meantime, a new factor of considerable importance had been introduced into the problem.

Late in July, 1919, at the height of the successes obtained during the Bolsheviks' preoccupation with Kolchak, Denikin endeavoured to renew his depleted ranks by instituting general conscription throughout the area under his control. By this manœuvre he increased the size of his forces enormously and was able at first to widen the scope of his operations considerably.

Stalin, however, with his nose for potential weakness, was quick to see that though conscription seemed of great benefit to Denikin, in reality it represented his death warrant. While ever he relied upon the volunteer



VLADIMIR ILYICH ULIANOV (LENIN)

Cossack soldiers who detested the every action of the Bolsheviks, the White leader was sure of a reliable striking force which, if not as numerous as the Reds, was certainly better trained and more efficiently armed. When he introduced conscription he destroyed this nucleus of trustworthy troops by diluting them with a mass of ill-trained and unreliable pressed men.

Lenin endorsed this view wholeheartedly to the assembled People's Commissars in these words: "A general mobilization will finish Denikin off, just as it finished off Kolchak. So long as his army was a class one, consisting only of volunteers of an anti-Socialist character, it was strong and reliable. He was certainly able to raise forces more speedily when he instituted compulsory military levies, but the greater the size of his army, the less class-conscious it is and the weaker it will become. The peasants conscripted into Denikin's armies will serve him in the same way as the Siberian peasants served Kolchak; that is to say they will disorganize his forces completely."

What Lenin and Stalin predicted was very soon to become fact, but in the first weeks of the successes in the north, the Red forces were compelled to retire before the White offensive. From Kiev the advance rolled on through Kursk into the important rail centre of Orel, until, in September, the Cossack cavalry were deploying before the industrial city of Voronezh, less than 200 miles from Moscow. Fresh detachments began to arrive during October and Stalin's plans for a decisive counter-offensive were set in motion.

Seizing on the dissatisfaction felt by many of the poorer Cossack peasants at Denikin's stubborn refusal to institute reforms of any kind, Stalin commenced the formation of the first Soviet Cavalry Division. Trotsky made tentative objections to this new development, on the ground that any cavalry force must necessarily contain a large percentage of the anti-Socialist Cossacks, and would therefore be unreliable. The need for effective action was so great, however, that this view was brushed aside as the Party issued the clarion call for volunteers: "Proletarians to Horse."

As leader of the new arm, Stalin's choice fell upon an old comrade of Voroshilov, the future Marshal Budienny, who had served as a private soldier in the Russo-Japanese war and had risen to the rank of sergeant-major in the World War. Without waiting for a long period of training, Budienny attacked Denikin's cavalry to the south of Voronezh and scored a surprising success, revealing qualities of leadership which marked him out for rapid promotion.

Reinforced in this manner, Stalin quickened the pace. A frontal attack was immediately launched against the Whites, while at the same time a further Red army, commanded by the ex-Guards officer, Tuchachevsky, executed an enveloping movement which succeeded in turning Denikin's right flank and rolling it up on the already hard-pressed centre.

Stalin's able appreciation of the weak points of his opponent's position was soon obvious. In a desperate effort to prevent Tuchachevsky's force from cutting across his rearward lines of communication, Denikin ordered a general retreat. With a powerful Soviet army in front of him and harried on his flanks by Budienny's guerilla horsemen, the retreat grew daily more precipitate. On October 15th he evacuated Kiev and retired in the direction of Kharkov and Poltava, leaving large quantities of war material of which the Soviet forces were urgently in need.

By January the last remnants of the Whites had been swept from the



Ukraine and the Red troops veered to finish off Denikin's demoralized army, which was now moving back through those Caucasian valleys which had been the scene of many of Stalin's earlier achievements.

On March 15th the people of Tiflis welcomed the Red forces with scenes of wild enthusiasm, for few Tiflis workmen had not personally experienced the courage and ability of the man they had so long known, first as Sosso and later as Koba Djughashvili.

Eleven days later Stalin entered Baku as a deliverer, while Denikin was hurriedly evacuating his broken armies at the Black Sea port of Novorossiisk. Having seen his grandiose schemes smashed by the genius of a man who had never received a single day's orthodox military training, General Denikin gave up his command and fled to Constantinople, leaving his troops to try and reach the White army of General Wrangel in the Crimea as best they could.

On this note of personal triumph for Stalin, the liquidation of the Czarist forces from Russia was completed. The Bolshevik Central Committee was loud in its praise of Stalin's remarkable achievement, he was twice decorated with the coveted Order of the Red Flag and was unanimously elected to the Supreme Revolutionary War Council. Among the many tributes paid him was one from his old opponent, Karl Radek, who admitted in an article in *Pravda* of February 23rd, 1935: "Stalin was the leader of the proletarian army and the military genius of the civil war."

It was obvious to all competent observers that the Soviet regime was proof against any attack from within, but in spite of this one more attempt was made to restore the old order which the Revolution had hustled into the limbo of history.

General Wrangel, having restored something approaching discipline into what was left of Denikin's armies, crossed to the mainland from the Crimea on June 6th and began an advance in the direction of the Don Basin. Without hesitation the Soviet Government dispatched Stalin to deal with the new threat, again giving him full plenary powers and freedom to take any steps necessary to obtain a quick decision.

By contrast with incompetents like Denikin and Kolchak, Wrangel was an extremely able officer, well versed in the orthodox methods of warfare. He had benefited by the sorry example of his late Commander-in-Chief to such an extent as to provide himself with a base for operations by fortifying a series of towns in the Crimea, and with the same end in view he deliberately attempted to organize the territories occupied by his forces on an anti-Soviet basis. It is certainly possible that the abilities of Wrangel might have brought success to Czarism even at this eleventh hour, had he not been opposed by a man of the calibre of Stalin.

Towards the middle of September, encountering little opposition, the White army crossed to the right bank of the Dnieper and continued its advance across country. On October 14th, having drawn his opponent as far as possible from his base, Stalin gave the order to counter-attack. In a sharp engagement at Pokrovsky, Budienny's cavalry again demonstrated its power as an offensive weapon and the Whites were forced to retire.

In contrast to the chaotic retreats of Denikin and Yudenich, Wrangel's generalship was equal to the task of taking his army back to the Crimea intact. Further attempts to put the clock back to before the October Revolution were now obviously out of the question and Wrangel proceeded

to evacuate his troops in an orderly manner to Constantinople, from whence they could be repatriated as they desired. With Stalin's entry into Sebastopol on November 15th, 1920, the last vestige of Czarism disappeared for ever.

In considering this interlude in Stalin's life, several notable achievements and innovations stand out as additional tribute to his immense capabilities and his capacity for untiring effort. Wherever the situation seemed most hopeless, wherever incompetence and disloyalty were weakening the cause, on no matter what front and under any conditions, there Stalin was sent, with the results we have seen outlined above.

Adequate comment on his manner when faced with a difficult situation is provided by a characteristic telegram, one of many which were constantly passing between him and Lenin: "... I will rectify this weakness and many other local weaknesses, too. I am taking, and will take, the proper measures, even to the extent of removing the Regimental and Staff Officers who are ruining the cause. I shall not hesitate to override any formal difficulties if this is necessary. For this I shall naturally take full responsibility on my own shoulders."

But it was not only as a "cleanser of the Augean stables of the Revolution" that Stalin's Civil War years were remarkable. He made in addition several valuable contributions to the future of the Soviet military forces.

In the early days of the campaign in Siberia against Kolchak, Stalin made the first attempt to organize the civilian opposition to the Whites which existed far behind the battle front. In Siberia, where, for six hundred years, exiles and opponents of the Czars had lived in exile, the traditions of revolt were deeply ingrained in the peasantry, only requiring stimulation to enable them to flare up again. With what effect Stalin used this latent spirit can be seen by the number of desertions and casualties about which Kolchak complained so bitterly.

To direct activity of this kind in hostile territory and to carry out espionage among the enemy, Stalin took the first steps to create a body of secret agents, which were later used by Djerzhinsky as the basis of the organization which was to gain much notoriety as the dreaded Cheka.

To Stalin also is largely due the creation of the first Soviet Cavalry Army under Budienny's command, a branch of the Red Army from which has grown the tremendous mechanized force of to-day.

This brief account of Stalin's part in the black years of the Civil War, when the survival of the Soviet Power seemed sometimes only a matter of days, cannot do better than conclude with a description by Kaganovich of the effect of Stalin's presence on a gloomy situation: "He had one idea only: we must win. This indomitable will of Stalin's transmitted itself to his immediate assistants and, in spite of being in a situation from which there was practically no escape, not one of us had a moment's doubt about victory. And we triumphed."

## CHAPTER IV

## LENIN DIES

AS THE CRUISER "GENERAL KORNILOV" STEAMED OUT OF SEBASTOPOL harbour with the last of Wrangel's troops aboard, the responsible leaders of the Soviet State looked around them at the great country which had for so long been a battlefield.

Many of them recalled the scene at the first meeting of the Bolshevik Government, the feeling of elation, the tumultuous cheering as Lenin mounted the platform and the first words of the new ruler of Russia, spoken quietly and without oratorical flourish: "We shall now proceed to the construction of the Socialist Order." How far off those days seemed now. Between the era of Kerensky and the beginning of unchallenged Soviet rule, the armies of fourteen nations had loosed a river of blood so deep as to have no parallel in the history of Civil Wars.

To the men whose task was to construct the long-desired "Socialist Order" Russia presented a spectacle before which even the boldest shuddered.

Russian participation in the Great War, and her efforts during the Civil War had cost the country the equivalent of £15,000,000,000 sterling and the loss of millions of lives. Except for the area round Petrograd and Moscow the entire country had at one time or another passed temporarily under the control of the White armies, who invariably and wilfully destroyed all factories and industrial plant within reach of their guns, rather than permit the Revolutionary Government to take them over. Transport, never very efficient, was in a state of complete chaos, even the Trans-Siberian railway being impassable for long stretches as a result of the wrecking proclivities of the Czech legions of Admiral Kolchak.

Of the nineteen million mobilized men, nearly four-fifths were poor peasants, whose lands had lain fallow during their absence. Livestock and all movable foodstuffs had been ruthlessly requisitioned by both Whites and Reds, horses had been slaughtered in thousands and used for food during the terrible winter of 1919; in fact so appalling was the situation in the villages that even the peasant farmers had difficulty in feeding their own families, let alone assist in provisioning the towns.

Black bread had long been a luxury in Petrograd and Moscow, whose workers frequently had to exist on oil cake and potatoes for months at a time. Even during its bitterest campaigning, the Red Army had often been without shoes or replacements of any kind, even its rifles being, more often than not, European types captured from the various invaders. In the midst of the desolation, enemies abounded. Members of the former wealthy classes sought revenge for their dispossession by committing acts of sabotage against the new authorities, for which assistance the interventionist Powers shamelessly paid large sums.

In this context the first Workers' Government embarked upon its herculean task.

A tentative step had already been taken by Trotsky early in 1920, when Red Army detachments, fresh from the defeat of Yudenich and Denikin, were turned *en bloc* into labour armies and set to work organizing the

vital services necessary to keep the country going. By recourse to this method some success was at first obtained in the sphere of transport, but this temporary improvement was immediately seized upon by Trotsky to support his demand that the entire Red Army should not be disbanded but should be used as the "shock troops of industry." Expressed in bold phrases there seemed much to justify this view, in spite of the chorus of whispers that the recent convert to Bolshevism was less anxious to rehabilitate industry than to perpetuate his own control over the Red Army.

Lenin and Stalin, however, took a longer view, believing that men who have endured six years of constant fighting would be most anxious to return to their homes and would look with disfavour on a suggestion which would prolong their service indefinitely. In order to test the situation in practice, Stalin accepted the post of President of the Council of Labour Armies for the Ukraine and loyally did his best to make Trotsky's schemes work. A few months of this sufficed only to strengthen the view which he had shared with Lenin. Discontent was growing among the soldiers, who considered that the Revolution, for which they had fought so heroically, was according them scant benefit for their labours.

On the basis of Stalin's report, Lenin came out definitely in opposition to Trotsky's arbitrary extension of the Civil War into the period of reconstruction. The Bolshevik leader admitted that the struggle they had experienced had necessarily compelled the Party to postpone its creation of a completely Socialist State, but this was no excuse for the artificial prolongation of the system of "War Communism," rather should the times of peace be used to blot out the memory of the old agonies.

Even such mild strictures were too much for Trotsky, who answered with an attack upon Stalin which descended to personalities but avoided dealing with the points at issue.

Stalin's position on this question of labour armies is of importance in a study of his character because it destroys the popular conception of him as a ruthless Dictator and demonstrates that, provided such a course is not detrimental to the well-being of the Soviet State, he is always prepared to deal with a problem from a humanitarian standpoint.

Much discussion has arisen around the attitude of the Russian Marxists to moral questions of this nature, and it is often said that the credo of the Bolsheviks permits them to employ any means whatever to achieve their ends. Like most such generalizations this is only a half-truth. In his books dealing with the philosophy of Marx, Lenin clearly defined his own views upon this vexed question, views which were translated into practice by his successor.

According to Lenin the factor governing the conduct of a Bolshevik must be, first and foremost, the safety of the Revolution, to maintain which the Party member must be prepared to sacrifice his very life if need be. Lest this should be hastily interpreted as giving a free hand to anyone to act exactly as he pleased, Lenin hastened to show that, when a Bolshevik descends to base and unworthy methods, he destroys the confidence which the mass of the people feel in Bolshevism and thus, in the long run, weakens the Party, quite apart from any transient gains obtained by the manœuvre.

When the Menshevik leader, Dan, accused the Bolsheviks of building socialism by the same means as the Pharaohs built pyramids, Stalin replied by posing the vital question: "Who are the rulers? The working class or

the nobles, the Pharaoh or the peasants?" Who can compare a despot forcing his subjects to serve his personal interest and a militant people defending their own property and their hopes for the future?

At this period also, when the prospects looked blackest, the transcendental greatness of Lenin was made obvious to all. Scorning to deceive the people with false hopes of an immediate and speedy improvement, he invariably called a spade a spade, exposing weaknesses and frankly admitting errors. In speeches not dissimilar to those of Mr. Winston Churchill in the early days of the war, the Bolshevik chief told his people plainly that their tasks for the next few years would be hard and improvement slow. Many enemies remained to be overcome and many far-reaching changes made. In this connection and in common with Stalin, Lenin is one of those rare figures in political life who openly and honestly confess to error in a recent decision, instead of incorporating the admission in "Memoirs" written years after the points at issue.

No sooner had Stalin's views prevailed on the question of War Communism than a new debate began between him and Trotsky, this time on the subject of the relation of the Trade Unions to the Soviet State. Trotsky wanted to take from the Trade Unions all real power, subordinating them completely to the State and confining them to purely cultural activities. In opposing this suggestion Stalin was on firmer ground, for his experience gained among factory workers and the general membership of Trade Unions had convinced him that the type of workman whose political knowledge fits him for service as a Trade Union official could also be used as a mouthpiece for the adequate expression of official decisions taken by the Government.

For Stalin, the Trade Unions were something very much more than a mere appendage of a political regime, they could be used by the Bolshevik Party as a widespread liaison organization between itself and the proletarian rank and file upon whose continued support it depended. Once more Stalin carried his point, although at every victory he drove Trotsky further and further away from the ideas of the majority of the Party.

Stalin's opinions on this question of the rôle of the Trade Unions are set out at some length in the article, "Our Differences," which appeared in the official Press at the time. In this work the writer showed how, having failed to organize industry on the lines of "Labour Armies," Trotsky was now barking up the same tree with regard to the Trade Unions. But, went on the article, there was even less need for military methods in regard to the Trade Unions than there was with the demobilized soldiers, because, "the peasant soldiers belong to a class which is socially antagonistic to the proletariat and therefore may need a little coercion, but with the rank and file workmen organized in a Trade Union, such methods are not necessary because the workers have already demonstrated their willingness to give everything in defence of the Soviet State."

With Lenin openly on his side, Stalin triumphed once again and gave Trotsky one more grievance to add to the series which was soon to drive him into open war against his successful rival.

Now that something resembling peace had come to Russia, Stalin began to devote an increasing amount of time to the office of Soviet Commissar for Nationalities, to which he had been elected in November 1917, but which had been relegated to the background by the pressure of Civil War.

Mention has already been made of Lenin's early decision to entrust to Stalin the future policy of the Soviet Government in regard to the subject nations of Russia, a decision reached after studying Stalin's articles on the question which had appeared in a series in the Bolshevik cultural review, *Prosvyeshchenye* (Enlightenment).

In the future Constitution of the Soviet State, issues of tremendous importance were to depend upon how successfully the Bolsheviks could bind the races and creeds of Russia into one harmonious whole. Lenin had insisted upon this as far back as the early days of the Great War. Though he had never published any authoritative study of the question, he must have very early impressed upon Stalin, then in his early thirties, the vital urgency of the problem.

There exist in the modern Soviet State at least twenty clearly defined nationalities, quite apart from subdivisions, dialects and mixed races, of which one historian has discovered at least one hundred and fifty. In a country the size of Russia this is not surprising; after all, the European mainland has just as many separate nations and tongues, confined in less territory.

In Russia, however, not only have the different peoples a language and culture of their own but they are of entirely different ethnological types. There is infinitely more similarity between, say, an Englishman and a Spaniard than exists between a White Russian and an Usbek, a Bashkir and an Armenian. The Englishman and the Spaniard, though of different racial origins and speech, are mutually aware of one another's characteristics and can understand the mental attitudes of each other, even though not admiring the practice. No such comprehension prevailed in Russia, where at least eighty adults out of every hundred could neither read nor write, living and dying according to the customs and practices of their ancestors, customs which had scarcely altered since the Middle Ages.

This was the situation which Stalin faced in 1921, with the additional handicap of having no assistants of outstanding ability, no officials except those trained in the tradition of the Romanovs, for whom the subject peoples had been merely a source of revenue and cannon fodder. There was no spectacular fanfare, no trumpeting and self-advertisement about the way Stalin set about his task. Trotsky had already discovered an easy way to recruit staffs by the simple expedient of offering jobs to the displaced officials of the old regime, who were at least able to muddle through without making too obvious errors. How valuable these "hired Bolsheviks" really were was later revealed, for when Trotsky's prestige fell and his influence grew correspondingly weaker, his assistants and confidants had no compunction in transferring their allegiance to whoever could guarantee their salaries.

This was not Stalin's way; by careful hand-picking the Commissariat for Nationalities slowly acquired a staff whose qualities and technical achievements made their department justly famous as the most efficient of the multitude of bureaux and sub-committees which were generated by the early years of reconstruction.

By 1922 Stalin had completed his researches into the question of the "Nationalities" and in accordance with the practice he invariably adopted he submitted his observations to Lenin, who was engaged in drawing up the first draft of the "Constitution of the U.S.S.R." Into that draft, Lenin incorporated Stalin's suggested solution to the national problem almost

without alteration, setting the seal of his approval to his disciple's idea of the ideal form of government which was to reach its final fruition in the famous "Soviet Constitution of 1936," which Sidney Webb so rapturously characterized as the "most advanced conception of government yet seen in history."

Stalin's thesis began by demonstrating the already proven fact that the misrule of the Czars and their treatment of the subject peoples as inferior beings, had been one of the main factors in the rapid disintegration of the old Empire. "If we fall into this error of Great Russian superiority, we shall suffer a similar fate," insisted Stalin, "but if we go to the other extremes advocated by the Mensheviks and certain European Socialist parties, and divide the new State into a number of separate entities on an ethnological basis only, we shall weaken ourselves *vis-à-vis* the capitalist states of Europe and eventually be defeated piecemeal in a future war." Between these twin dangers Stalin steered the Soviet ship on a middle course.

In his suggested plan the right of secession from the Soviet Republic was granted to each one of the Constituent States should its people prefer to rule themselves rather than live under the ægis of the Bolshevik Party. While it remained part of the U.S.S.R., each nation was to have its own elected Assembly, which would exercise complete authority in the local concerns of the population; only in decisions as to foreign policy were the Assemblies subordinate to the Central authority. No attempt was made to russianize the peoples of the different nations, cultural traditions were to be perpetuated in the new schools, already spreading into the most backward provinces.

By these means Stalin confidently maintained that the centuries-old antipathy between the subject peoples and their Russian oppressors could eventually be destroyed.

The wisdom of this fundamental contribution to the creation of the U.S.S.R. has now been proved to the hilt. Whereas in the half-century before October, 1917, national uprisings against the Central Government had occurred with unfailing regularity, under Bolshevik rule not one widespread effort has been made by any one of the peoples to escape from the Federation of Soviet Republics. This is in itself a great achievement and will in the future be recognized as one of Stalin's most far-reaching contributions to world progress, as each succeeding year piles proof on proof of the sound foundation upon which the Soviet State has been constructed.

Without Stalin's foresight, Japan would unquestionably have established a puppet kingdom in Eastern Russia at the same time as she annexed Manchukuo; but for the solidarity of the Stalin Constitution Hitler might have found support among the Ukrainian people such as he found among the rabid Nationalist minorities which brought Austria, Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia and France under a foreign domination. Perhaps even these misbegotten offspring of the Versailles agreement would have achieved a lasting stability, if they had originated in the same free choice which created the Soviet State.

Side by side with his early work as Commissar for Nationalities, Stalin was also engaged in the economic field, where he shared with Lenin and Buharin the task of instituting the New Economic Policy, now generally known by its initials N.E.P.

Prior to their practical experience of government, the Bolshevik Party

held certain definite and preconceived plans for the economic reorganization of Russian life. Many of these ideas, though reflecting excellent principles and high ideals, were rather naïve in the assumption that a successful Revolution would eradicate at one blow the old social system, and change completely the individual psychology of the mass of the people. Events soon dispelled this wishful dream; as Lenin ruefully remarked: "Men do not become angels because there has been a revolution," nor, he might have added, can the social habits of generations be swept away at one stroke.

On the jagged rocks of human personality the ship of Utopian Communism very soon foundered. Others had posed the question of radical changes in programme before Stalin made any remarks on the subject. Trotsky, fresh from his heady successes against Yudenich, proposed the organization of the entire population on military lines, to regiment the nation into freedom rather than budge from what was obviously a mistaken principle.

Lenin, ever clear-sighted, scorned to escape from an error by cloaking it with another greater one and bluntly told the Central Committee: "we have made the mistake of thinking we could pass straight to Socialism without transition." Looking round him, Stalin also insisted that the situation was so serious that no amount of surface adjustment could make any difference, something entirely new must be evolved, and soon.

The situation which forced the Bolsheviks to the N.E.P. is easier to understand in its present perspective than it was to those earnest defenders of theory who so hotly opposed it in 1921. The crippling of Russian industry by the Civil War and the fact that imports from the advanced European States had fallen to zero, had caused a terrible shortage of manufactured goods. The Russian peasantry, numerically many times greater than the proletariat, found itself unable to obtain the consumer goods it normally expected in return for the surplus produce of its land. As a result, in typically short-sighted fashion, the moujik reduced his production of foodstuffs to meet his own needs only. This widening gap between the villages and the town was called the *Smychka* (Scissors).

As early as 1920, the effects of this economic suicide were alarmingly clear. However, the Bolsheviks were then locked in a death struggle with the armies of the interventionists and had no time for compromise; if the peasant blindly refused to sell the foodstuffs required to maintain the industrial centres and the Red Army, then the State must requisition them. This was done by decree of the Supreme Soviet but its result was negligible, the peasantry had grown thoroughly accustomed to "official orders" during the Monarchy and simply ignored the mild requests of the new Government. In this situation the Bolsheviks were forced into action; forcible requisitioning of provisions began immediately, special bands of soldiers being charged with the unpleasant task of wresting their hoards from the farmers.

The result was to be expected. The moujik surrendered his stocks of food, but he refrained from sowing the following year, except for the needs of his family, demonstrating more clearly than wordy argument that forced labour of any kind eventually defeats its own purpose.

In 1922 roughly half as much land was under cultivation as in 1913. The total grain harvest of 6 milliard poods in 1913 had dropped to 2.8 milliards, sugar-beet, cotton and hemp, vital industrial necessities, had



fallen to one-third of the pre-war figures. In livestock the situation was even more catastrophic, even in 1916 Russia possessed 190 million head of cattle, whereas after five years of Soviet rule only 125 million remained. State enterprises and co-operative undertakings, which were ultimately designed to solve the peasant problem, had perforce been neglected during the years of upheaval, with the result that only about one per cent of the arable land was cultivated on Socialist lines.

The entire Bolshevik Party recognized its mistaken attitude towards the peasants, but lest it should lose confidence in ultimate victory, Lenin hastened to add: "We have certainly committed many errors and failures, but was it possible to create a type of State new in history without mistakes and failures? We shall not cease to correct our errors and to search for the best application of Soviet principles by trying to correct ourselves." The New Economic Policy was the first of these attempts at correcting a political error.

In order to ensure sufficient food for the working masses of the towns, the rigid laws against private trade were relaxed. The State kept an iron hand on banking and heavy industry, but granted concessions to small manufacturers, distributors and farmers to trade on the old basis. Though N.E.P. produced a great deal of evil reminiscent of the first years of the World War, its immediate effect was salutary. Small factories, disused since 1917, rushed into production, while the peasant-smallholder made every effort to produce a maximum crop in order to make a few roubles to recoup his losses in the previous years.

Such a state of affairs naturally encouraged speculation and profit grabbing, but the Soviet Government in 1921 was in no position to be squeamish. Though it was forced temporarily to descend to the elementary capitalism of the early nineteenth century, Bolshevism survived and gained a much needed respite during which a start could be made to rehabilitate the shattered economic structure of Russia.

Needless to say, the N.E.P. was greeted in the bourgeois countries as a sign that Bolshevism had been forced to surrender its conceptions of a new social order and return to a competitive system which must sooner or later follow the normal course of development into a capitalist economy. This jubilation was doomed to a short existence. Within three years Stalin was to sweep the New Economic Policy into the ash-can when once it had served its purpose and return to the true principles which Lenin had bequeathed to his faithful followers.

From contemplation of the improvements of the N.E.P. and rising hopes of reconstruction, the Bolshevik Party was rudely torn.

In May, 1922, Lenin fell ill.

Among the upper stratum of the Party it was well known that only Lenin's will-power kept him at his work so unremittingly. Late in 1918, a Social Revolutionary fanatic, Dora Kaplan, had made an attempt on the life of the Bolshevik leader which, if unsuccessful at the time, shortened his life to a brief span of five years more. One bullet lodged in the base of his skull, so close to the brain that the surgeons hesitated to attempt its removal. After a short convalescence Lenin returned to a task which demanded his ceaseless attention, knowing that in so doing he risked insanity or death.

In spite of their acquaintance with these facts, the Bolshevik Party had

grown so to depend upon the genius of its leader that the possibility of continued existence without him was never contemplated. Now, at its conference held so soon after the terrible news, the Party heard Zinoviev report that for the first time the seat of the beloved President was to be empty; Lenin was stricken with sclerosis of the brain and could neither speak nor write.

In its agony the Party looked distractedly around, many of the delegates sensed what would happen if the worst should materialize and Lenin were to die. Who would then be able to restrain the boundless ambition of Leon Trotsky? Who would give courage to the lustful Zinoviev? Who would keep Kamenev away from the political trickery at which he excelled? Who would control the fanciful theories of Buharin and Piatakov?

What answer the rank-and-file members gave in their own minds to these vital questions cannot be discovered, for the conference resolutely refused to mention openly the dread possibility that Lenin might be gone from them for ever. Perhaps they signified their real thoughts when they unanimously confirmed the election to the important post of General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, of Josef Stalin, friend and close confidant of the absent President.

Thus, in the midst of the nation's grief at the illness of its acknowledged leader, Stalin reached the pinnacle of his career, for even in his present position of supreme authority he holds no other important post except that of General Secretary.

While the remainder of the Party heads were warily assessing their personal powers, gathering round themselves a nucleus of supporters against the day when Lenin's death should vacate the position of President of the Council of People's Commissars, Stalin continued with the tasks which had been set him by Lenin a few weeks before his collapse.

In his old homeland, the Georgian Bolshevik Council had shown itself so incompetent that the remnants of the Social Revolutionary Party, which had ceased to wield any influence everywhere else in Russia, had managed to gain wide support among the Caucasian peasantry. Taking advantage of the traditional hatred felt in the province for everything Russian, the S.R.s and their Menshevik allies were agitating for secession from the U.S.S.R. and the setting up of an independent state of Georgia.

As usual the task of cleaning up other people's failures descended on Stalin. Taking Sergo Ordjonikidze with him, he hurried to Tiflis to settle the problem once and for all. At a previous meeting held in 1921 he had replaced the weak-kneed Makharadze by the reputedly more energetic Mdivani, but further investigation soon showed that the new leadership was no better than the old. Convening an immediate conference of the Georgian Bolshevik Party, Stalin delivered a scathing address in which he did not spare the offending members, many of whom, Mdivani included, were old personal friends. Within twenty-four hours an entirely new administration was at work under the leadership of Ordjonikidze, who could be trusted to apply Stalin's ideas in their entirety. No further outbreak of Georgian nationalism has occurred since these steps were taken, which, bearing in mind the country's turbulent past, speaks highly of its reorganized administration.

Returning from Georgia, Stalin found government circles in Petrograd and Moscow seething with personal jealousies and ill-disguised intrigues.

The illness of Lenin was having its effect and the weaknesses of many of his former associates were rising to the surface. While presenting a united front to the Russian people, the Party leaders were already fearfully watching for signs of a move from Trotsky in the direction of supreme power. The issue was, however, postponed for a while by the partial recovery of Lenin.

In September of 1922 the President of the Council returned to work. He was only the shadow of the former Lenin, speaking and writing less forcefully and without the amazing breadth of knowledge he had previously shown, but he was back and able once again to whip the Party back into unity.

The interlude was destined to be tragically brief and Lenin himself was well aware that he was very near to death, so much so that he made one final effort to weld the different personalities around him into a single entity which would resist any effort to break it. That he did not succeed was not his fault but lay in the fatal weaknesses underlying the characters of the men who, but for Stalin, had been closest to him.

In the last few weeks of 1922, Lenin completed the letter to the Party which is now generally known as the "Testament of Lenin." The name conveys a wrong impression, it was in no sense a Will, for Lenin never regarded his position as something to be bequeathed to another, he knew that he occupied the President's chair because of his abilities alone; it was his dearest wish that his successor should do likewise.

How wrong he was, how tragically optimistic, can be clearly seen from the fate of the Testament itself. The Party leaders, each one of whom knew its contents, first decided not to publish it while its author was alive and later postponed publication indefinitely. Trotsky, who was later to make much of the "Testament," concurred in this decision which was broken finally by accident. A copy had been received by a visitor to the U.S.S.R., the American Left Wing journalist, Max Eastman, who promptly gave it world-wide publicity in the Press of the United States. Sad reflection that the last words of so great a leader should reach the Russian people from a back-stage newspaper scoop in New York.

In the Testament, Lenin gave a brief characterization of the leading figures of the Party. Trotsky, brilliant but too diverse in his interests; Zinoviev and Kamenev, indecisive and untrustworthy in a crisis; Buharin, clever but not a confirmed Marxist; Stalin also received his share of criticism as being "too rude" to fill the office of General Secretary to everybody's satisfaction. In spite of this, Lenin's rebuke to Stalin is the least severe of all; the faults of the others lay in fundamental weaknesses, Stalin was simply too brusque to smooth over the trivial personal frictions of his subordinates.

Stalin himself has always regarded Lenin's reference to him as more of a compliment than otherwise. In an address to a later congress he repeated the words, adding: "Yes, Comrades, I am rude to those who seek to weaken the Party by their activities and I shall continue to be rude to such people."

On this depressing note of impending dissension, Lenin's life drew to its close. For months he lay in a state almost approaching imbecility, his lucid moments growing fewer and shorter, even speech became impossible as the paralysis spread through his limbs. The Party clung to the false

hope of his recovery until the end. In December, 1923, Kamenev told the Party congress: "Vladimir Ilyich is better, we look forward to the moment when he will return to his post."

On January 21st, 1924, worn out by his labours, Lenin died.

Detailed estimation of his character is not within the scope of this book, nor is it necessary. Lenin, more than any other political figure of his age, can rest his claim to glory upon the achievements of his life and the veneration he inspired in death.

Perhaps in those brief moments when his tortured mind shook off the dreadful paralysis, knowledge of the increasing strength of the State he had created made his tragic fate more bearable. The Census of March, 1923, showed that industry and agriculture were rapidly recovering from the setbacks of war, while the population had risen to the impressive total of 133 millions. Towards the end of the year twelve of the greatest nations of the world acknowledged the Soviet Government for the first time.

That death should take Lenin at such a time is doubly tragic. He was prevented from reaping the fruits of his life's work, and out of the many Party leaders he had so carefully trained, only one remained unshakably a Leninist.

## CHAPTER V

### THE STRUGGLE WITH TROTSKY

WITH LENIN GONE FOR EVER, THE PARTY MEMBERS WAITED ANXIOUSLY FOR signs of the struggle for succession which seemed inevitable. For the first few weeks after their leader's death the shock of bereavement and grief at their common loss held the remaining Party chiefs together in uneasy unity.

Only Stalin seems to have been fully conscious of what kind of struggle he was about to enter. In this short period others waited for a signal to act, but dared not take the first steps; Stalin had no such qualms, but began immediately to construct his own defences and prepare to maintain the principles of Lenin even though their originator was dead. The student of to-day is able to see in the events following Lenin's death the intuitive knowledge of the psychology of the Russian people which Stalin showed most clearly in his later career.

The doctrines of Marx and Engels, essentially European, had never succeeded in penetrating the veil of traditional mysticism and religious longings which had always been powerful in Russia since the days of the early Czars. While Trotsky and others sneered contemptuously at this "relic of former backwardness," Stalin turned it to his own purposes and those he believed Lenin would have desired.

The body was laid in state in the Kremlin, while members of the Bolshevik Central Committee took turns to watch over the remains of the revered leader. Thousands of peasants and industrial workers arrived in Moscow to gaze upon the features of the man they had loved so dearly; they can scarcely be blamed if they noted that, among the symbolic figures standing silently by the bier, Stalin was prominent, but Trotsky was never seen. In his later efforts to justify this amazing stupidity, Trotsky took refuge behind the fact that he was ill at the time and only received the news of Lenin's death while travelling to the Caucasian Riviera for a

holiday, a fact which would certainly not have prevented Stalin from taking his place by the body.

While Trotsky was scribbling notes and random reflections on the "passing of poor Lenin," Stalin was laying the corner stone of his rise to power. The earthly remains of the man who had been so worldly wise, so completely materialist, were embalmed with almost Oriental rites and ensconced in a huge red tomb in the middle of the Red Square in Moscow. Doubtless Stalin explained all this to his colleagues in the Central Committee, as a memorial to the ideas and achievements of Lenin, but whatever reason he gave, the fact remains that from being a memorial, the Tomb of Lenin became a shrine at which the Communist believers worshipped the past and besought spiritual aid for the future.

In February, 1924, Trotsky returned and resumed his work as Commissar for War and member of the Political Bureau. Those who had predicted an immediate fight for power between the War Lord and the General Secretary were disappointed. If anything, Trotsky seemed quieter and more anxious to co-operate than he had been during Lenin's life. However, if such a show of humility deceived the rank and file, it failed to convince Stalin, who was always more ready than his rival to carry ideas to their logical conclusion.

Stalin's suspicions were soon justified. By March, 1924, any hopes which the Communist Party had of the success of the German Revolution which had begun in 1923 were soon dashed, and with them Trotsky's hope that a success in Germany would mean a revival of the Civil War years on the larger canvas of Europe, thus bringing him once more into a leading position as War Commissar. Now that all possibility of succeeding to the aegis of Lenin by peaceful means had flown, Trotsky commenced to fight in earnest.

Far too much weight is often given in current history books to the idiosyncrasies of character and personal peculiarities of great men, but in the case of Stalin and Trotsky such a proceeding is essential to an understanding of the long and bitter conflict within the Bolshevik Party, beginning with the death of Lenin and continuing until Trotsky's assassination in August, 1940.

Two more completely contrasting personalities cannot be imagined. Trotsky, the revolutionary *per excellence*, brilliant as an orator and the ablest polemical writer of his time (Mr. Churchill once described him as the "best paid propagandist in the English language"), but deficient in constructive ability and congenitally incapable of working in harmony with others. Stalin's qualities were neither so all-embracing nor so colourful. Hard-headed and slow-moving, contemptuous of theory except when it had definite bearing on a practical problem, he possessed an almost uncanny capacity for patient waiting and an intuitive sense of when to strike to best advantage.

To contemporary European students of the Russian scene, the victory of Trotsky seemed a foregone conclusion. To-day we can see clearly that against Stalin's rock-like determination, the vapourings and theatrical gestures of Trotsky were completely ineffective, in fact only a fortunate combination of circumstances enabled him to prolong the conflict as long as he did.

Two most important factors were ranged on Stalin's side and he pro-

ceeded to extract the maximum advantage from each. The history of Bolshevism and the early necessity of creating an organized force under semi-military discipline, had inculcated in the rank and file a powerful sense of dependence upon the responsible Party leaders. This had been accentuated in the first few years of State Power, when the life and death struggle for survival had made it necessary to do away with too much discussion and substitute an unquestioning obedience. This fact, which rendered the Bolshevik Party unique among the revolutionary groups of history, was so deeply ingrained that, with the one exception of Trotsky, none of the members attempted to destroy the Party; they confined the whole conflict to an internal struggle for supremacy.

Considering that Stalin ruled the material affairs of the Party in his capacity as General Secretary and that he alone had had the advantage of Lenin's support throughout his career, the failure of the opposing groups to extend the struggle, in its early stages, beyond the confines of the Party was tantamount to cutting their own political throats. When the certainty of defeat drove them to appeal to the general public they merely accelerated their own destruction.

One further point in Stalin's favour was the personal relations existing between Trotsky and the other leading figures. For this Trotsky had only himself to blame. Arrogant, cynical, contemptuous of mediocrity, his whole career had been dotted with violent outbursts directed against innumerable lesser personages.

Unable to lead by his own example, he tried to compensate for the deficiency by an apparent ruthlessness which got things done no more quickly and caused him to be heartily detested by the same men whom Lenin bound to himself by ties of mutual respect and tolerance. Men of the calibre of Zinoviev and Kamenev, no friends of Stalin, helped him to defeat Trotsky because they were too blind to realize that the despised General Secretary was by far the strongest personality of all and would eventually destroy not only their mutual enemy, but also themselves.

In this dangerous context, Trotsky decided to make his bid for power. In October, 1924, he broke his long silence by publishing a volume entitled *The New Course and the Lessons of October*, in which he exaggerated his own part in the 1917 Revolution and disparaged that of everyone else. He seems to have decided that while ever Stalin was supported by Zinoviev, Kamenev and the others, his own chances were small and therefore the wisest course would be to drive a wedge between his opponents and defeat them piecemeal.

Unfortunately for the project, Stalin was also thinking along similar lines. With this end in view, *The New Course and the Lessons of October* left Stalin severely alone but made a violent attack on Zinoviev and Kamenev, who had certainly done much to justify these severe strictures. Pointing out that his two opponents had disagreed with Lenin in 1917 and even tried to prevent the October rising, Trotsky berated them as renegades and incompetents.

Despite its violent language Trotsky's outburst was a complete fiasco in the political sense, for it merely served to drive Zinoviev and his ally into the arms of Stalin, who naturally welcomed them as useful auxiliaries against Trotsky and, what was equally important, two more votes in the Politbureau.

Even in this apparently favourable situation, Stalin took no action, exercising the caution which had always been his strength. Instead of conducting a frontal attack upon Trotsky, he permitted Zinoviev to carry on a violent duel with the War Commissar in the Party Press. As the debate grew increasingly heated, both parties threw off all restraint. Zinoviev exposed Trotsky's many errors in the old days of exile, while Trotsky descended to personal abuse against his opponent's private life.

Stalin, inscrutable and silent, let the undignified exhibition run its course, knowing that the more reputable members of the Party would take careful note of the disclosures made on both sides. Zinoviev's revelations were to prove particularly valuable, for their author had lived for many years with Lenin in Geneva and London and had all the subterranean machinations of Trotsky at his finger tips, including many telling remarks made by Lenin in the old days of internal conflicts.

While keeping a wary eye on these developments Stalin consolidated the basis of his own influence by a move, the significance of which was lost upon the others. He decided to extend the range of Party democracy and give to the lower strata of members an increased share in the decisions as to policy, well aware that such votes would be cast in his favour as the one figure of solid worth on the Politbureau who remained steadfastly above the mire and mud-slinging, which seemed to dominate the Party.

Elaborating this idea a little later (May, 1925) he was to say: "Any Party which hides the truth from the masses is not a Party but a clique of impostors doomed to ruin," a telling blow at the two frenzied combatants who were exposing one hidden skeleton after another. "We must," he continued, "follow the policy of liquidating old administrative governmental methods, the policy of giving real vitality to the soviets, the policy of transforming the soviets into real elective organs, the policy of implanting in the countryside genuine bases of Soviet democracy." By such dignified and high-minded appeals, Stalin gained ever increasing support from members like those who complained so bitterly to Buharin: "What has happened to the Party of Lenin, that it should descend to this?"

In allowing himself to be drawn into so degrading an exhibition, Trotsky himself set in motion the forces which were soon to leave him almost friendless. His former success as an orator, which had drawn the breathless panegyrics of foreign observers and had made him known and admired to thousands, could not last in face of the picture of the popular hero turned scandal-monger. At the opposite pole, Stalin increased his reputation a hundredfold, emerging from the whole affair with greatly augmented prestige.

To make assurance doubly sure, *Pravda* commenced a series of weighty articles on the subject of Trotsky's earlier differences with Lenin, laying particular stress on those which had arisen since 1917. The proposal to employ the Army as a State Labour Corps, the attempt to incorporate the Trade Unions into the State and many less important disagreements. The decline of Trotsky's popularity in the Red Army, and the antagonism shown towards him later by Tomsy and the Russian Trade Unions, date from this period and drove one more nail into his political coffin.

From the limbo of the debates of 1906 and 1907, Stalin resurrected Lenin's attacks on Trotskyism, which accused Trotsky of Menshevik errors and a desire to split the movement in order to gain personal prestige.



LEON DAVIDOVICH BRONSTEIN (TROTSKY)



Buharin undertook to show that Trotskyism still existed, that it had always existed, even in the days when Trotsky pretended to have forsaken his former mistakes and come over whole-heartedly to Lenin's view.

Leninism, Trotskyism; Good and Evil. Lenin the infallible prophet of a new age, dead but still watching over his people in spirit and through the personality of his old friend Stalin, was presented as the antithesis of Trotsky the dilettante, the fly-by-night trickster, intelligent, but not to be trusted.

It is difficult not to condemn Stalin for such an over-simplification of the issues before the Soviet people. No man, even a politician, is ever entirely good or completely bad, and the creating of the Lenin-Trotsky myth, while based on fact, was unquestionably a distorted picture of reality. Even this objection could not easily be levelled against Stalin at the time, after all, not he but Zinoviev, Kamenev, Buharin and the rest were digging the foundations from under Trotsky. Only to-day can we see beyond question that Stalin's hand was behind the manoeuvre, and even so we have to hesitate before passing judgment.

The man who smashed Trotsky was the same Koba Djugashvili who drew up for Kamo the plans for the Tiflis expropriation, the man who had walked defiantly between the murmuring soldiers in the Baku prison yard; the only difference was that now he worked on a larger scale.

The peculiar mentality of the Russian revolutionaries, the Bolshevik amorality which approximates closely to the reflections of Messer Niccolo Machiavelli in his Florentine exile five centuries before, was so deeply ingrained in Stalin that to attempt to assess his moral attitude to the events of these days is to discuss a question which never existed.

A Party which had looked with sympathy on the career of Bakunin and his fiery disciple Nechayev was not likely to be squeamish when facing the alternative "Destroy Trotsky or he will destroy us." To listen to Nechayev is to agree that, after all, Stalin might have eliminated Trotsky by physical violence and still remained a perfect Bolshevik: "Bit by bit I have convinced myself that to establish a serious, indestructible society you must base yourself on the policy of Machiavelli and the Jesuit order, choosing violence for the body and lies for the mind." Trotsky, though defeated, survived to the age of 61; other political leaders, faced with less serious opponents, might have treated him as Hitler treated Röhm and Schleicher, as Mussolini dealt with Matteotti.

Against the opposition of such a man, Trotsky's manoeuvres seem almost puerile. He continued to fulminate against the "old Bolsheviks," accusing them of degeneration, cowardice, and all manner of heinous sins of omission. He had not the elementary good sense to concentrate his artillery on one particular aspect of his enemy's position but distributed insults and appeals in bewildering succession at every single action taken by the majority. His only allies were drawn from the student youth, to whom his personal vitality and rather theatrical mannerisms passed for the attributes of revolutionary genius. Even here his resolution failed him and he hesitated to call upon the youth to break with the older sections of the Party. In one breath he condemned the older leaders as "political corpses" and in the next enjoined the need to maintain the unity of the Party at all costs; when he modified this opinion later he had ceased to yield any influence at all.

In January, 1925, the first real blow descended on the head of the

Russian Danton, he was deprived of the office of Commissar for War and lost his seat on the Military Council. From the Politbureau, comprising Stalin, Buharin, Rykov, Tomsy, Zinoviev and Kamenev, it was not considered necessary to remove Trotsky, he had long been in a minority of one anyway.

The same month the aftermath of the German debacle and the blood-bath following the defeat of revolution in Esthonia, both of which he had hailed as signs of victory, set the seal to Trotsky's defeat. He retired sullenly and devoted himself to waiting as patiently as possible for more favourable circumstances to continue the fight.

The jubilation shown by Zinoviev and Kamenev at their successes contrasted strangely with the sober satisfaction of Stalin. The two turn-coats had always regarded Trotsky as the only figure of importance between them and absolute power. Stalin they sneeringly dismissed as a provincial ignoramus, efficient as a back-stage manipulator and a ruthless executive, but in no way comparable to themselves. They looked forward with confidence to the early transformation of the Triumvirate into a committee of two.

How completely they were mistaken was soon evident. Stalin knew, he had always known, that Zinoviev and the like were not his equals when "doing" was concerned. In theoretical discussion and hyperbolic writing they had their uses, but 1925 was a year for "doers." He was not deceived by the fawnings of the two converts, he had known and watched them too long not to have assessed their characters. Before 1925 was out rumours were going the rounds of the Party that all was not well in the Troika; "Zinoviev and Kamenev are intriguing against Stalin" seemed to be the general view.

In the next step in his rise, Stalin's extraordinary political sense shows even more vividly than it had done at the most dangerous point of the Trotsky episode, for though they themselves were of far less stature than the ex-Commissar for War, Zinoviev and Kamenev possessed well-organized political machines of their own and did not hesitate to use them against Stalin.

Gregory Zinoviev resembled Trotsky in many ways—he was an able, if perfervid, orator, well versed in political and philosophical theory, and he had the considerable advantage of having been very close to Lenin during his lifetime.

In London in the first years of the twentieth century, in Finland and later in Geneva, Zinoviev had lived in the same house as Lenin and his wife Krupskaya. Though fully aware of his colleague's faults, Lenin seems to have liked him well enough to have addressed him habitually as Gregory, no small compliment from the undemonstrative Bolshevik leader. Power soon went to Zinoviev's head and gave him an appetite for more, not commensurate with his abilities. He lacked decision and, but for Lenin's personal influence, would have left the Party altogether in 1917 because he refused to concur in the decision to revolt, on the grounds that the revolutionary movement was not yet strong enough—all this within a month of the actual overthrow of Kerensky.

Since the October days he had occupied two positions of great importance in the State, he was president of the Communist International, and chairman of the Leningrad Soviet. In Lenin's Testament, reference is made to the

weaknesses in the character of Zinoviev, events as usual confirmed the judgment. Wily, lustful, and a physical coward, he never seemed able to bring his "courage to the sticking-point," a fatal defect in one who aspired to overthrow Stalin.

Leon Kamenev, Zinoviev's auxiliary and brother-in-law of Trotsky, was cast in much the same mould. He had held several important posts and was now President of the Moscow Soviet. Gentle, intelligent, a capable writer and good organizer, he needed a stronger character to act as his leader. It was his tragedy that his choice for that rôle should have been Gregory Zinoviev.

The underground machinations of his two colleagues came into the light in February, 1925, when, under the guise of friendship, they proposed that Stalin should be appointed Commissar of War in place of Trotsky, the office of General Secretary to be given to a nonentity named Rudzutak, who could be relied upon to act according to their plans. Such gestures had no effect upon Stalin, except to put him on his guard. His own nominee, Frunze, entered the War Department with the task of removing any Trotsky supporters who might still be lurking there.

At this time Stalin's earlier policy of giving added powers to the provincial Soviets brought him unexpected allies, chief among whom was the Ukrainian militant, Lazar Kaganovich, later to become Commissar of Transport.

Zinoviev and his associates decided on two main lines of attack, one theoretical, one practical. A statement of Stalin to the effect that it was possible to build a Socialist Economy in Soviet Russia alone was attacked as a contradiction of the basic principles of Marxism. Endless quotations from Marx, Engels and Lenin were produced to show that Socialism could only be achieved on a world scale; Stalin answered by more quotations from Lenin and awaited more positive moves.

In their next offensive, the two Triumvirs made a similar mistake to Trotsky's—they condemned the policy of the right wing of the Party, thus driving them into a bloc with the centre (Stalin). They began cautiously by drawing attention to the weak points of the N.E.P., insisting that the small private businesses and farms were growing dangerously and leading the Soviet State back into capitalism. To counteract this, they demanded strong measures against the Kulak (wealthy peasant).

Buharin and Rykov, both members of the Politbureau, took the opposite view that, since N.E.P. had unquestionably brought increasing prosperity to the U.S.S.R., it should be widely extended. Faced with the unexpected demands of Zinoviev and Kamenev, the Rightists promptly allied themselves to Stalin. The latter accepted their assistance, for without their votes he would have been in a minority in the governing committee. Until such time as the removal of the trouble-makers could be achieved, he could afford to close his eyes to the extravagances of his new friends.

With Stalin's tacit approval, Buharin advanced the slogan: "Kulaks, enrich yourselves"; strange words they must have seemed to the man who, two years later, was to "liquidate the Kulak" altogether. By this temporary concession Stalin was able to use Buharin, whom Lenin had regarded as the best theoretician in the Party, to reply to Zinoviev's thunderings on the subject of "Socialism in one country," checkmating his opponents completely on this front.

Both sides prepared for the supreme trial of strength at the Fourteenth Party Congress, which was scheduled for December, 1925. Fully aware that the Opposition would rely for much of its support on the delegations from Moscow and Leningrad, Stalin used his authority as General Secretary of the Party to inject a number of his supporters into the local Soviets in the two industrial centres, for the purpose of exposing the real aims of the schemers.

Three months before the Congress, after a considerable period of silence, Stalin counter-attacked. As he had previously used Zinoviev to discredit Trotsky, now he employed Buharin to nibble away the reputation of Zinoviev and Kamenev. Without compunction, he made public all the waverings and indecisions of his opponents, even producing from the archives a copy of a telegram sent by Kamenev to the Grand Duke Michael, offering his support to a constitutional monarchy which should replace Nicholas II.

Far more damaging were his revelations of all the discreditable manoeuvres of Zinoviev against Trotsky. *Pravda* gave details of a secret meeting between Stalin and his two late associates on the Troika, in which Zinoviev had descended so low as to suggest that Trotsky be removed by an assassin, in such a way that the deed could be attributed to some counter-revolutionary agent. Stalin's reply was characteristic: he did not deplore the moral aspect of the situation, which probably never occurred to him, but he would not be a party to such bad political tactics. "Why make a martyr out of Trotsky, who will certainly be defeated anyway?" he is alleged to have replied, adding the significant warning: "An amputation policy is full of dangers to the Party, the amputation method is dangerous and infectious; to-day one is amputated, another to-morrow, a third the day after. What will be left of the Party in the end?"

Stalin had not forgotten the tragic history of the French Revolutionary leaders, who turned from mutual assistance to rend one another in a fight for power, only to elevate Napoleon Bonaparte to an Imperial throne. If blood were needed, he would not shrink from the shedding, but above all else the Party must remain secure.

The effect of these powerful attacks on the Opposition leaders was seen at the Congress. Speeches by Zinoviev were howled down and, in spite of the half-hearted support of a small group of delegates from Moscow and Leningrad, Kamenev's proposals were rejected by an overwhelming majority. Overawed by such clear evidence of his own impotence, Zinoviev lost his nerve and made public apology to the Party and Stalin personally, promising to refrain from further subversive acts.

Like Trotsky, the Second Opposition retired to wait for more propitious circumstances. Such a situation could not continue long; within three months Zinoviev was making tentative approaches to his late opponent, suggesting a common front against Stalin. Trotsky, flattered that his enemies should solicit his leadership, acceded to their request. In so doing he sealed his own fate and gave one more proof of his tragic lack of political acumen.

In accepting the help of Zinoviev and Kamenev, twice perjured turn-coats, he gained nothing, but lost much by voluntarily letting himself be tarred with the same brush as his new friends. In April, 1926, the Opposition Bloc was tormented at a secret meeting in a Moscow apartment.

The ex-triumvirs gave Trotsky complete satisfaction by accepting in

full the very programme they had so fiercely attacked when he himself had presented it eighteen months before; their sole contribution was a brief and pointless reference to the theory of "Socialism in one Country." To make the picture of reunion complete, Trotsky dropped his attacks on Zinoviev and Kamenev.

In spite of their programme, Stalin had no fears from this grandiose combination. He immediately characterized it for what it really was, "an unprincipled bloc with nothing to hold it together except hatred of the General Secretary of the C.P.S.U."

Bearing many imposing signatures, the "Programme of the Fifty-Three" trumpeted defiance. Zinoviev opened the campaign by publicizing the Opposition's demand for the immediate "super-industrialization" of Soviet economy, to be financed by a crippling levy on the N.E.P. traders and small farmers. In reply Stalin appealed to the Nepmen and Kulaks, whose whole-hearted support was presented to him by Zinoviev's sweeping attacks. Trotsky reverted to his early efforts to turn the Party youth against those "Old Bolsheviks," whom Lenin had once playfully described as "Old Imbeciles." Having taken his earlier defeat to heart, he was now convinced that, if necessary, a new party must be created to oppose the official body. To gather recruits for this objective, he distributed his supporters among the local Soviets and factory committees, with instructions to express the Opposition viewpoint wherever possible.

This final manoeuvre more than anything else goaded Stalin to sudden action. Wordy criticism he would permit, but an Opposition which sought to undermine the very roots of Leninism must be smashed once and for all. He had ammunition in plenty and began by giving great prominence to Zinoviev's strictures on Trotsky and the latter's replies in the great controversy of a few months earlier. Pressure was brought to bear by the official spokesmen in the local Soviets, which made short work of the Opposition elements.

Faced by such a show of force and frightened by the implications contained in Trotsky's suggestion to set up a new party, Zinoviev and his group again surrendered and again made public and servile apologies to Stalin, who once more forgave them.

In 1926, however, the outbreak of revolution in China brought the Opposition back to life for a brief spell before its final dissolution. The revolutionary movement in China, led by Sun-Yat-Sen, had always been sympathetically regarded by the Russian Bolsheviks, who had rendered every assistance to its Chinese equivalent, the left wing of the Kuomintang. Later in the same year, the nationalist leader, Chiang-Kai-Shek, seized control of the Kuomintang and proceeded to exterminate its Communist members without mercy. The Russian Opposition rushed back into action, laying the blame for the failure of revolution in China upon the shoulders of Stalin.

The fact that the policy of the Chinese Bolsheviks was largely ordered by their own leaders was conveniently forgotten in the general rush to belabour the Party Secretariat.

Following upon the treachery of Chiang-Kai-Shek, Stalin endeavoured to save the situation by enlisting the assistance of the Red Armies led by the so-called Christian General, Feng-Yu-Hsiang, who whimsically preceded his day's slaughter by half an hour of prayer. After a short-lived

success he was again betrayed. Feng went over to the Kuomintang, assisted in the massacre of 10,000 workmen in Canton and delivered up the Communist leaders to Chiang, including the young girl, Chen-Pai-Ming, who was put to death by the horrible torture of garroting.

Stimulated by the ill-luck which dogged Stalin's policy in China, the Opposition decided to come into the open for a final attempt to oust the General Secretary. Preparations began for the Congress of 1927.

If he had received a setback in China, Stalin was by no means beaten. This time he decided to destroy the Opposition altogether and to accept no more sham capitulations. On November 15th, 1927, the Central Committee of the Party decided to expel Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev from its sittings. On December 18th the assembled Congress confirmed the earlier decision and expelled all the leading dissenters from the Party.

For all its bellicose phrases, this was more than the Opposition expected. Expulsion from the Party meant the loss of good jobs, the loss of citizen rights, possibly even Siberian exile would follow. Only Trotsky and a few others were sufficiently steadfast to endure this. First Zinoviev and Kamenev, then Rakovsky, Sokolnikov and others, asked forgiveness of Stalin. In the most servile terms, they begged to be allowed to re-enter the fold, forswearing all future connections with Trotsky and the intransigents.

For the last time, with surprising lack of animosity, Stalin granted their request, allotting them subordinate positions but removing them from leadership of the Moscow and Leningrad Soviets.

Trotsky, when all hope of success had vanished, decided to fight. He attempted to address a crowd from his hotel window in Moscow and had to be removed from the capital by force. He was sent to the village of Alma-Ata, on the borders of Turkestan. Even here his intrigues continued, letters addressed to his former associates were seized by the police and the Government decided to remove the danger by deporting him, after first taking away his Soviet citizenship. In February, 1929, he left Russia for the island of Prinkipo, near Constantinople, there to begin the long series of literary attacks on Stalin and to organize the underground activities of his agents, which eventually culminated in the Treason Trials of 1935-8.

One country after another expelled him for interference in its domestic affairs, until he finally found refuge behind the high walls of the Villa Hermosa in Coyoacan, a suburb of Mexico City. He was killed in August, 1940, by blows from an axe and died accusing Stalin of the crime. Whether or not the charge was justified, only Stalin's clemency permitted him to proceed from Russia to the relative freedom of exile.

Having rid himself of the menace of Trotskyism and reduced Zinoviev and Kamenev to impotence, Stalin now proceeded to retrace those backward steps which the exigencies of the conflict had forced upon him. "Enrich yourselves," the supremely reactionary slogan of the Buharin fraction, had already caused him much trepidation. The moment his hands were free the movement back to the old ideas of Lenin began.

Drawing from the original industrial proposals of the Opposition, a State Commission set about preparing plans for the economic development of the Soviet Union. An essential part of these plans was the collectivization of the small, individual peasant holdings, into huge State farms, run on modern scientific principles. This brought Stalin face to face with Buharin, Rykov, Tomskey, and the Right Wing of the Party.

To the man who had, in three years, destroyed the highly organized political machines of Trotsky and his late colleagues, the Right Opposition presented few problems. Buharin made frantic efforts to enlist the support of those Opposition leaders who had capitulated in 1927, but with little success. One of these, Piatakov, one-time Ukrainian leader and no lover of Stalin, frankly admitted that he would prefer to live under the Leninism of Stalin than the type of regime which would exist if he were removed. In a letter to a friend, Piatakov wrote: "Stalin is the only man we must obey. Buharin and Rykov deceive themselves in thinking that they would govern in Stalin's place. Kaganovich and such would succeed him and I cannot and will not obey a Kaganovich."

Ordjonikidze, Stalin's closest friend, did not hesitate to pretend sympathy with the ideas of Buharin, in order to counteract any move against the Party leadership. To Ordjonikidze, Buharin imparted a desperate project to remove Stalin by force, a threat which caused Stalin no alarm but merely confirmed his decision to finish off this last remnant of the "deviators from Leninism."

In July, 1929, Buharin was removed from the editorship of *Pravda*, Rykov lost his seat on the Politburo and the Right Opposition disappeared without a struggle. So cowed were the former hunters of Trotsky and Zinoviev that Stalin could afford to treat them with something approaching contempt. Buharin was allowed to continue his theoretical and philosophical work, Rykov became a lesser functionary in a Government department, while Tomskey, though removed from Presidency of the Soviet Trade Unions, remained to act in a consultative capacity with the new leaders.

The cobbler's son from Gori, the despised "hall sweeper of the revolution," had broken the Bonapartist ambitions of the intellectuals and kept aloft the banner of Leninism.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PLANS

#### I. Industry

THE FUTURE HISTORIANS OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY RUSSIA WILL CHARACTERIZE the years 1928-34 as the "era of Socialist Construction" or as the "age of Bolshevik Ruthlessness," according to their own political convictions. Of the tremendous constructional achievements there can be no question and of ruthlessness there was more than enough.

Before condemning out of hand the means which Stalin employed to make the Five Year Plans a success, it is well to remember that official brutality was by no means new to Russia. In the sixteenth century, Ivan the Terrible, the first of the Czars who set Imperial Russia on the road to greatness, had faced a situation comparable to that of Stalin in 1928.

Ascending the throne as a young man, full of hope and confidence, he soon discovered that he was master of All the Russias in name only. Feudal nobles exercised authority as independent rulers, giving only nominal allegiance to the Czar, while ambitious and venal courtiers swarmed on every hand. As Stalin was to do five hundred years later, Ivan waited in



patience, assessing the characters and motives of the men he knew must be broken if the country was ever to be a united and great nation. The period of waiting over, the Terrible leapt into action. Setting one group of nobles against another, he destroyed the exhausted survivors at his leisure. Those few who remained aloof were swept aside into exile or death, those whose services were used by the Czar were overthrown when they had served their purpose. But through the welter of blood and the mists of dissimulation, the Russian crown emerged so strong that it endured for five centuries during which the thrones of Europe toppled and shook.

Living in a world which was experiencing the Spanish Inquisition, the Huguenôt wars, and the reigns of Bloody Mary and Selim the Cruel, the career of Ivan excited little comment from contemporaries. Later chroniclers gave him the designation "the Terrible," with no more regard for his achievements than have those who lightly dismiss Stalin as a "bloodthirsty despot."

Ivan defended himself with dignity and sincerity, in words which Stalin could use with equal justice: "At first we did not inflict the death penalty on anyone. We ordered them to dissociate themselves from their old leaders; we made them confirm this promise by an oath. Not only did they not dissociate themselves from the traitors, but they aided them in every possible way, and did their best to restore them to their former power and stir up against us the most treacherous conspiracy. *Then only, seeing their stubborn wickedness and their unconquerable spirit of rebellion, I inflicted on the guilty the penalty of their crime.*"

Those who accuse Stalin of brutality in the execution of the State Plans cannot ignore the face that he has never denied the suffering and the pain, answering the charge as Ivan answered it before him: "Many among you say that I am cruel; it is true that I am cruel and irascible, I do not deny it. But toward whom, I ask, am I cruel? *I am cruel toward him who is cruel toward me.*"

Two centuries after Ivan, Peter I was to win for himself the cognomen "Great" because of the advancement he brought to Russia, tearing her by main force from the Dark Ages to modern times. To accomplish the seemingly impossible, Peter spared neither himself nor his people. Conscious of his goal, he travelled towards it relentlessly, smashing through no matter what barriers.

Where Stalin was later subjected to widespread execration because he used the forced labour of political prisoners to build vital canals and railroads, Peter was hailed as "Great" while employing far more drastic measures. Early in his reign, the port of Taganrog was built with incredible speed by convicts brought from Siberia for the purpose; the construction of St. Petersburg on the treacherous marshes of the Neva is generally recognized as a stroke of genius, in spite of the unquestioned fact that its creation cost the lives of a hundred thousand peasants. Voltaire, the bitter enemy of French Absolutism, could only remark after viewing the scene: "But at last the town exists." We may be sure that, in Stalin's eyes at least, the continued existence and the strength of the Soviet State is ample compensation for any regret occasioned by the pitiless oppression necessary to achieve his purpose.

The passage of time and the lasting successes of Peter and his predecessors have destroyed the biased image of a sadistic monarch ruling by the knout;

in its place is an understanding not only of the facts of the brutalities, but also of the necessity which brought them to the fore.

On December 21st, 1929, Stalin celebrated his fiftieth birthday. The date may be said to represent the turning point of his career. Behind him alike were the years of revolutionary effort and struggle for survival against the machinations of his enemies. Though still, in theory, only the General Secretary of the C.P.S.U., in practice he was unquestioned ruler of the Soviet State and sole arbiter of the destinies of 150 million people.

Others had aspired to the same position, if with less justification, but the basis of his continued pre-eminence was already guaranteed. By his deliberate creation of the "Lenin Legend," Stalin had consolidated his position as the spiritual and practical heir of the dead leader. By merciless attacks upon the errors of Trotskyism and unwavering defence of the principles and political conceptions of his chief, this identification of himself with the Shade of Lenin had become even more secure.

In a nation which had always signified its deeply spiritual yearnings by the reverence paid to ikons and symbols of salvation, it was but a short step to transfer its homage from relics of saints to the physical remains of Lenin. In place of the Cross, the Russian peasant burnt oil before the tiny busts of Lenin, which, though mass-produced in a matter of moments, had more significance than the age-old skeletons and jewelled images. Henceforward Stalin was to remain the Banner-bearer of Leninism, becoming almost a reincarnation of his old associate, until even the two names are merged as one, the living ideas of Lenin-Stalin taking the place of the cold abstractions of Karl Marx.

Behind Stalin and responsible for the rock-like stability of his Government stand the millions of Soviet citizens who have lived through one of the most exacting and turbulent epochs in world history. The nation which had endured three years of war with Germany and three years of Civil War had grown heartily sick of upheaval and unrest. A great craving for quietness and peace found place in the hearts of millions and caused them to react so fiercely on Stalin's side when Trotsky and the hot-heads threatened to force the nation back into the days of uncertainty and death. A similar desire for security had produced the empire of Napoleon Bonaparte from the ashes of the French Revolution. Napoleon used such support to embark on schemes for the aggrandizement of France; Stalin uses it to construct a Socialist Commonwealth, strong enough to survive in a hostile world.

And finally, Stalin's power is founded on the rock of Bolshevism. Comparatively few in number among so large a population, the members of the Communist Party were regarded by Lenin as the salt of the Russian earth, the vanguard of the working classes and the skilled engineers of the new society. Membership was not easy to win and promotion to positions of importance unobtainable, except as a reward for actual work among the proletariat. Naturally enough, after the successful seizure of power in 1917, every month of increasing stability caused thousands of place-seekers to try to enter the Party. These people, contemptuously named "October Bolsheviks," were regarded with suspicion by the hard core of comrades who had been tested in the days when to hold a party card meant risk of imprisonment and deportation.

In an attempt to close the ranks against the influx of unreliable elements,

the Party leadership had decided that all applications to join must be tested by the Secretariat, which should possess sole power to confer or refuse membership. At the head of this body stood the General Secretary, who thus held in his hands the open sesame of advancement in the State and the machinery for allocating Government appointments.

Such a position would be a source of great strength in a capitalist country; in Russia, with all industry, banking, foreign and domestic trade controlled directly by the State, it meant a great deal more. Doubtless the rank and file of the Party appreciated this fact when it elected Stalin to the post of General Secretary in 1922, in any event it gave him complete control of the State apparatus.

With his power so firmly based, Stalin took stock of the internal affairs of the first Communist State and compared them with the principles which Lenin had left him to defend.

The spectacle was not encouraging. The New Economic Policy had unquestionably done much to relieve the terrible distress which had existed after the Civil War, but it remained a definite step backward from the conception of Socialist economy which had always been an essential part of the Bolshevik programme. At a time when almost the whole of the larger industrial plants had been destroyed or seriously damaged the revival of small businesses employing one or two hands had been welcome, both as a means of keeping unemployment down and a source of the manufactured goods which the peasantry needed so badly.

So great had been the demand and so feverish the haste to obtain the products of even such primitive workshops that the proprietors very soon began to widen the scope of their operations. Not only were the businesses extended, but all the old disreputable knaveries of uncontrolled capitalism began to appear like mushrooms. Speculation in foodstuffs, petty cornerings of essential needs, usury and all the familiar evils returned in rapidly increasing degree. The autocratic capitalism of the Czars had certainly disappeared, but its place had not been taken by the Soviet system but by early "free-trade" capitalism resembling that of England and France in the early nineteenth century.

To make matters worse, the state of mind existing among the Nepmen was not conducive to disinterested progress. The small business man never forgot that the abolition of private enterprise was an essential part of the Communist ideology, an idea which might have been temporarily abandoned but which was always felt to be uncomfortably near. In a situation of this nature it was natural for the proprietor to take a very short view, since to put money back into a business in the shape of long-term improvements seemed ridiculous when the business itself might conceivably be taken away in the very near future. What extensions and alterations were made had no object other than to produce and sell as much as could possibly be made at a minimum of cost.

Lenin had remarked in one of his addresses to a congress of students: "Communism is 90 per cent book-keeping," impressing on them the necessity of keeping a careful check upon all tendencies, stimulating the progressive ones and adjusting those which seemed dangerous.

In the midst of this economic chaos, Stalin was quick to point out that the backbone of a strong industrial state was still lacking. Heavy industry, which had suffered most during the years of upheaval, was still in a parlous

condition. Since it would be necessary to expend large sums over a period of years before profits began to be made, the Nepmen made no effort to improve the situation but concentrated on a system of "quick returns."

*Pravda* opened its pages to a discussion on how best to remedy this defect. The first articles were written by Stalin and Molotov and had as their central theme a demand for carefully planned and co-ordinated effort to set the old heavy plants in motion again and to create new ones.

The suggestion had been made many times before, first by Lenin, who had to abandon it for the N.E.P. because conditions would not permit of anything but improvised methods, and later by Trotsky. The famous "Platform of the Opposition" devoted some sixty pages to a grandiose scheme for bringing backward Russia to industrialization in a very short space. A great part of the purely technical suggestions of the "Platform" were of definite value and were later incorporated by Stalin into the framework of the Five Year Plan, although when they were originally advanced in 1926 they seemed just one more of Trotsky's Utopian mirages.

At Stalin's suggestion a State Planning Commission was set up and given the task of preparing the first Five Year Plan. The leading personalities on this Commission were technical experts like Grinko and his associates; Stalin merely exercised an overriding power of veto on any suggestion which might seem unsuitable.

Towards the end of 1928, the labours of the new organization resulted in the first of the magnificent series of plans which created such a stir that a new word was incorporated into most languages; the State which had given the world the Soviets and replaced the respectful Mister by a more friendly Tovarich, now inaugurated the first Piatiletka.

The Five Year Plan was alarmingly simple in its statement of objectives and equally blunt in detailing suggested means to provide the financial support, without which it could not hope to succeed. By 1928 the economic condition of the Soviets had almost reached the level of 1913-14; it was now proposed to triple these figures in the industrial sphere, while the productivity of agriculture should be increased by 50 per cent in five years.

To reach this staggering target, Grinko estimated a total expenditure of 86 thousand million roubles, an astronomic figure when compared with the total national wealth of Russia in 1928, although, in actual fact, the same expert was able to announce with justifiable pride in 1932 that the estimated expenditure had already been exceeded and the Plan had in fact been supported by a total disbursement of 118 thousand million roubles.

In order to raise the necessary money, the Commission made it clear that as much as possible of the nation's yearly wealth would have to be diverted to the use of the Plan. Such a proceeding would inevitably mean lowering the standard of living, already unbearably depressed, and rigid limitation of the manufacture of non-essential products.

The experts took careful note of the example of post-war Germany, where a shortage of consumer goods had produced a spiral of rising prices and rising wages, resulting in an inflationary wave which had shaken the national economy to its foundations. In order to avoid a similar catastrophe in Russia, rationing of all essential products to a minimum was immediately instituted. Food queues appeared again in Moscow and Leningrad, but this

time the objectives and needs of the Plan had been so carefully explained that the general public accepted the situation, a little ruefully but with none of the violent outbursts which the late Czar had been wont to associate with the existence of bread lines.

As a further source of money, the sponsors of the Plan received Stalin's permission to attempt a novel experiment. It was obvious to every well-informed observer that before Russia could attempt to build factories she must first obtain machinery and general plant from the European countries and the U.S.A. However, no capitalist state would make loans to the Soviet, when every industrial advance she made must necessarily mean the closing of a hitherto profitable market. To get round this difficulty the Communist Party decided to make use of an increasing proportion of the agricultural wealth of the nation. The amount of exportable foodstuffs, grain, and timber, would automatically increase to some extent as a result of the rationing system; other restrictions were soon to be imposed to free still more for export.

Beginning in 1929, the U.S.S.R. commenced the application of the policy which is now referred to as "dumping." Russian goods were offered for sale at prices deliberately reduced to below that of their competitors. Private producers and vendors throughout the world were helpless to meet this challenge. Because its entire economy was under State control, the Soviet could sell at prices neither governed by the cost of production nor influenced by the law of supply and demand, and was therefore in a very advantageous position for this kind of manœuvring.

Tactics such as this, coming at a time when world economy was entering the biggest slump in its history, produced immediate yells of execration. Between the fires of declining trade and the rising tempo of opposition from their own working classes, the bourgeois politicians leapt about in verbal frenzy. M. Poincaré pointed the most accusing finger: "Everything in the U.S.S.R. is subordinated to carrying out a Five Year Plan which allows dumping to spread rapidly to manufactured articles. By this system the U.S.S.R. proposes to introduce into other nations, to their increasing economic embarrassment, discords and disagreements which make it impossible for them to arrange for their own defence"; a jaundiced view, perhaps, but clearly indicative of what the French Right-Wing Government thought of the new Russian policy.

An interesting article of Stalin's at this juncture comments with heavy irony on the injured tone of the capitalist Press and reminds its readers of the "happier" state of affairs in the non-Socialist world, where "a year's coffee crop in Brazil is burnt to keep up prices, milk is poured into American rivers, while hunger and unemployment are everywhere increasing."

Not everything went smoothly with the "dumping" plans. The bourgeois states imposed high tariffs and forced the U.S.S.R. to cut its prices even more drastically, but, in spite of the difficulties, machinery, machine tools, and other vital necessities were provided in increasing quantities by the foreign currency obtained in this fashion.

To the strains of foreign catcalls and with a steadily falling standard of living, the Russian workman tightened his belt and strained every nerve to fulfil the tremendous quotas set by the Plan. Old factories were reorganized, new ones rushed into production, and every conceivable means used to increase productivity. Like Peter the Great, who also tried to turn peasant

Russia into an industrial nation, Stalin realized that the country's backwardness had at least one important advantage; the technical standards which capitalism had achieved by years of trial and error could be imported fully developed into the Soviet, whose new factories were unquestionably the most advanced in the world.

Under Stalin's guidance, Bolshevik Russia had no compunction in using, not only the mechanical devices of capitalism, but also its numerous tricks designed to obtain the maximum work from every employee at a minimum cost. The very methods which its European brother parties denounced were used by the C.P.S.U. in the interests of the Five Year Plan.

Piece-work, bonuses, Taylorism and individual competitive stunts were organized by factory directors throughout the U.S.S.R. under different names and with different objectives. Groups of workers in numerous factories engaged in weekly competitions for maximum output and were habitually referred to as the "shock troops" (*Udarniki*) of Russian labour. Later this process was to become known as Stakhanovism, called after the Donetz miner, Stakhanov, who established a record coal output for the whole of the U.S.S.R.

The murmured complaints of those who condemned this process, because it enabled some workmen to earn more than others, received a sharp rebuke from the General Secretary himself: "By equality we do not mean the levelling of personal requirements and conditions of life, but the suppression of classes; that is to say, equal enfranchisement for every worker after the overthrow and expropriation of the capitalists. It is the duty of everyone to work according to his capacity, and the right of everyone to be paid according to the work he does. Marxism starts from the fact that the needs and tastes of men can never be alike, nor equal either in quantity or quality."

As usual, in spite of Stalin's eminently sane way of looking at such controversial points, many of his subordinates carried the schemes to such excesses that the *Udarniki* idea became almost ludicrous. The provincial Press amazed its readers with wonderful stories of rain produced by shelling the clouds, of grain-sowing by squads of aeroplanes and similar phantasmagorias of wishful thinking, although these ideas seem to have borne fruit at a later date when Soviet technique reached something approaching its present level.

European readers, themselves haunted by the spectres of unemployment and falling wages, were regaled with newspaper stories about the more extravagant aspects of the Soviet Five Year Plan. Frequent quotations were made from an unfortunate speech by Krylenko to the assembled delegates at the Chess Congress of 1932: "We must finish, once and for all, with the neutrality of chess. We must condemn, once and for all, the formula 'chess for the sake of chess.' We must organize shock brigades of chess players, and begin the immediate realization of a Five Year Plan for Chess." To this naïve statement the French Right Wing Press facetiously added a fanciful description of scenes at an imaginary meeting of two "shock brigades of chess players," although the simple explanation is probably that Krylenko's knowledge of chess was somewhat rudimentary.

Setting aside the occasional errors due to the understandable enthusiasm of those who allowed themselves to be swept away by the amazing successes achieved in so short a time, it is an undoubted fact that the first year of the

Five Year Plan inaugurated an upward sweep of Russian economic progress such as was scarcely hoped for, even by the most sanguine members of the State Planning Commission.

Such far-reaching changes in the social fabric of the country were not completed without some activity from the remnants of the old Opposition groups. Many of the leading figures of the Opposition Bloc of 1927 had joined Trotsky in support of his demand for more rapid industrialization; from Turkestan, Siberia, and the Arctic regions they announced their support of Stalin's measures and endorsed the Five Year Plan as a vital, progressive step. Those among them who had technical abilities, were pardoned and given positions of trust in the numerous bureaux dealing with various aspects of the plan.

By contrast, certain small groups of incurable Trotskyist elements still remained unremittently hostile to the Stalin regime. Some had even succeeded in obtaining important positions in the State industrial undertakings, in order to gain favourable opportunities to hinder the fulfilment of the Plan. In addition to the consciously anti-Stalin elements, numbers of Nepmen whose small businesses had been absorbed by the State were also strongly antagonistic.

Inchoate and with nothing in common except hatred of Stalin, these individuals made no attempt to oppose the Government in public as the former Oppositionists had done. Underground organizations, liberally supplied with funds by their wealthy Nepmen sympathizers, endeavoured to spread confusion by acts of sabotage and machine-wrecking.

As early as October, 1928, the signs were obvious to Stalin, who acted promptly with his customary decision. Scorning to hide the existence of such opponents, the Politbureau unanimously decided to make an example of the culprits. *Pravda* began the campaign by the usual leading article, which unequivocally declared "War to the knife on the anti-Soviet wreckers." In the final months of 1928, fifty engineers were brought to trial on charges of treason and sabotage.

The world Press reported with amazement and a good deal of satisfaction the staggering revelations of the "Shakhty Affair." One after another the accused, all technical experts, confessed to the most revolting crimes and justified them by nothing except hatred of the Party leadership and the Five Year Plan. One group admitted having caused three floods in the Donetz coal mines, two train wrecks and numerous stoppages by machinery breakage, and added the last straw by declaring that these measures had been financed from funds embezzled from the working-class cultural organizations in the Donetz basin. Confronted by overwhelming proof, the majority confessed their misdeeds and tried to save their skins by laying the blame on others. But Stalin had finished with clemency and passed to retribution. Every one of the guilty were either shot out of hand or exiled to Siberia.

A similar but even more dastardly scheme was laid bare by the G.P.U. in 1930 at the so-called "Ramzen Trial," or the "Trial of the Professors." The accused were scientists in charge of one of the State food combines responsible for the feeding of workers in the Leningrad industrial area. Their contribution to the Five Year Plan consisted in adulterating the food with nauseous chemicals and adding powdered glass to the flour supplies. For this they too were shot or exiled, amid a public outcry which demon-

strated how solidly the general public stood behind the Government, and how infinitesimal had become the Oppositionists.

This time the Party leadership took the lesson to heart and did its best to cleanse the ranks of officials and technicians of all those who had formerly been connected with both Left and Right Oppositions. Ordjonikidze launched the attack with the warning: "Take our immense administration. You will find there a colossal number of good-for-nothings who do not want Socialism to succeed. People nobody knows what to do with, and for whom nobody has any use, are placed on the Control Commissions."

Stalin was even more direct in calling for an improvement in the industrial leadership: "The sources of all our troubles to-day are officialdom and the 'paper' administration of the social services, twaddle about the 'principles' of leadership without any 'actual' leadership, the absence of personal responsibility, the lack of individuality in work, the levelling system of wages, the absence of any systematic inspection of results achieved, and above all, the fear of self-criticism."

To the accompaniment of such heart-searching, the Communist Party members threw their whole energies into the scale against the hinderers and the laggards. To them, no less than to the official leaders, must go the credit for the successes gained. Already, in 1931, it was obvious that the original Plan, which had been jeered at as unattainable, would be completed in less than the prescribed time. "The Five Year Plan in Four Years" demonstrated the real solidarity of Stalin's rule.

To attempt a complete picture of the results obtained would degenerate into a maze of figures, but the general lines are clearly defined. Unemployment became only an ugly memory from the past, the total number of employed persons increased by 40 per cent in four years, during which workers' wages rose from 8 milliards to the staggering total of 30 milliard roubles.

The dreaded "smychka," the gap between the industrial towns and the country-side, had been finally removed by an increase in the relation of industry to agriculture from 40 per cent of the national production in 1928 to 70 per cent in 1932.

Heavy industry, Lenin's "backbone of Socialism," had increased by over 100 per cent and was now engaged in laying the foundation of new branches for which Czarist Russia had depended entirely upon European exports. Motor cars, tractors, agricultural machinery, were rolling off the production lines of factories designed by experts familiar with the good and bad points of the famous Ford plant in Detroit. As a source of motive power for this network, electrification took first place, increasing by leaps and bounds following the completion of the remarkable hydro-electric power plants of Dneprostroi and Magnitogorsk.

Whereas industry in the rest of the world grew chaotically and as a result of men's desire to make profit from manufactures, the Soviet was able, by virtue of its control of the entire national life, to plan and correlate all the necessary processes into one harmonious unit. Cotton mills have been built in the vicinity of the production area, with railways giving direct contact to the distribution centres and by the shortest route.

No less than fifty complete cities, each of over a quarter-million population, have been created in this effort to concentrate the various types of industry in closely knit areas. The identification of Stalin himself with



many of these new cities will be remembered while ever the Soviet State endures, for his name has been conferred upon them in as many forms as there exist appropriate geographical endings—Stalino, Stalinbad, Stalinsk, Stalinissi, Stalinir, Stalinogorsk, even Stalin—Aoul.

At the time the Soviet Press was indulging in dithyrambs of exultation at the successful completion of the Plan and proudly discussing another, the outside world was touching the bed-rock of depression.

The millstone of unemployment, falling wages and decreasing exports was dragging the nations into difficulties which seemed insuperable. In spite of their own parlous state, the authoritative newspapers of Europe and America had been mildly derisive or violently condemnatory towards the Soviet schemes; Stalin himself has preserved a record of the choicest of these weighty pronouncements and enjoys repeating them to Western visitors. As late as November, 1932, under headlines of "Ignominious Defeat," the *New York Times* dismissed the Plan (which had by then already succeeded) with the phrase: "It's not a plan, it's a speculation." In the same strain the Polish Official Gazette declared the plan to be a washout: "Breakdown of the entire system," said the Rome *Politica*, echoing the leader writer of the American *Current History*, which had proclaimed "Breakdown of its objectives, Breakdown of its Principles."

Even the wishful thinking of the numerous editors was not sufficient to prevent the true facts of the matter seeping into the minds of their readers. Not many weeks later the *Financial Times* was eating its own words: "There can be no doubt about their success. The Communists' exultation in their Press and speeches is by no means without foundation."

For the personal biography of Stalin, the First Five Year Plan marks a new stage. From being the best-loved figure in the U.S.S.R., he became one of the most quoted and most discussed personalities of the world. Hitherto he had left the talking, first to Lenin and then to various others who had supported him in the stages of his destruction of the Opposition. From 1928 to 1932 he made his bow before a world audience.

Over and above the usual speculations and extravaganzas concerning his private life, the real voice of Stalin gradually made itself heard. His speeches are very like himself and afford excellent material for an understanding of his mentality and character. Slowly-moving, even a little turgid, they show unmistakable signs of his early training for the priesthood and frequently have an almost liturgical sound. To educated Western readers they seem clumsy and without style; to the mass of the Russian people they represent the sober and honest opinions of a plain man to whom the finer points of grammar and diction mean less than the facts to be conveyed.

A frequently quoted passage clearly illustrates the far-reaching success of the Piatiletka and also the type of address which Stalin prefers.

"Formerly we did not have an iron and steel industry; now we have such an industry.

"We did not have a tractor industry, now we have one.

"We did not have an automobile industry, now we have one.

"We did not have an engineering industry, now we have one.

"We did not have an important and modern chemical industry, now we have one.



THE GREAT WARRIOR

Watching the Red Army from the Tomb of Lenin in Red Square. Ordjonikidze (extreme left), Jaroslavsky (with eyeglasses), Voroshilov, Stalin, Molotov, Kalinin

"We did not have an important industry for the production of modern agricultural machinery, now we have one.

"We did not have an aircraft industry, now we have one.

"In the production of electric power we were last in the list. Now we are among the first in the list.

"In the production of oil and coal, we were last in the list. Now we are among the first in the list.

"We had only one single coal and metallurgical base, the Ukraine, which we could hardly manage. We have not only succeeded in improving this base, but we have created a new coal and metallurgical base in the East, which is the pride of our country.

"We had only one single textile industry base, in the north of our country. In the very near future we will have two new bases of the textile industry, in Central Asia and Eastern Siberia.

"And we have not only created these new enormous branches of industry, but we have created them on such a scale and of such dimensions that they make the scale and dimensions of European industry pale into insignificance."

## 2. *The Peasantry*

In discussing the success of the Five Year Plan for industry, Stalin invariably accounts for it by the fact that in the industrial sphere its objectives were understood and desired by the great majority of the workmen whose labours made them possible. From the far-off days when he led demonstrations at Batum and sold leaflets at Tiflis, he has been conscious of his own affinity with the Russian working man. He has never pretended to be other than a product of the proletariat and he knows how best to appeal to the deep-laid desires of the industrial masses. With the peasantry he was not so successful.

Trotsky has described the peasantry as the "pack animal of history," he might have added that the Russian countryman had acquired not only the habits, but also the mentality of a mule. While the Five Year Plan was receiving the whole-hearted approval of the working classes, its agricultural proposals were viewed askance in the countryside.

The reasons for this inability to see upon which side their bread was buttered were largely due to the peculiar conditions prevailing in Russia. Whereas in Europe the breakdown of feudalism had given the peasantry some experience of small-scale farming, in Russia the huge estates of the aristocrats had retained their mediæval aspect until the outbreak of the 1914 war. The Revolution suddenly shattered the old system, divided up the land, and destroyed the last traces of serfdom.

Thus for the first time the Russian peasant became, in however limited fashion, a landowner. With the inauguration of the New Economic Policy the material benefits to be derived from private ownership became increasingly plain. The farmer began to enjoy something approaching prosperity, a state of affairs unique for the Russian moujkhik. The more successful of the small proprietors took advantage of the great demand for agricultural produce to extend their holdings, until large numbers of them became employers of labour in a small way. This was the section of the community which Buharin had called Kulaki.

With such experiences and such a background it is not hard to see why the State scheme to merge the small holdings into huge collective farms was regarded with suspicion by the Kulaks and also to some extent by those more backward peasants who imagined that the size of the State farms implied a return to the old days of serfdom and absent landlords.

Even at the farthest point in his Rightward swing towards the Buharin-Rykov fraction, Stalin was acutely conscious of the dangers arising from the rapidly increasing numbers of the Kulaks. Buharin's slogan, "Kulaks enrich yourselves," represented the greatest deviation from Leninism of which Stalin has ever been guilty. Although he recognized the necessity of gaining Buharin's assistance against Zinoviev and Kamenev, he had never been able to escape from the implications contained in the programme of the Right Wing. In his book, *Marxism and the National Question*, the danger of giving too much power to the backward agricultural communities had been fully discussed, while Lenin, in another context, had expressly stated that "the vote of one workman is worth more than the support of a dozen peasants." Now, after eleven years of Soviet power, Stalin watched with trepidation the growth of an agricultural middle class whose political ideas would be antagonistic to the creed of Marxism.

Once rid of Buharin and his group, Stalin resolutely turned back to his true principles. In January, 1930, *Pravda* gave expression to the new turn with a signed article by the General Secretary of the Party, which demanded "the liquidation of the Kulaks as a class."

In justice to Stalin it must be recognized that his appeal was directed against the Kulaks, not as individuals but as "a class whose interests were inimical to those of the proletariat." To break the political and economic power of the "agrarian capitalist" was all that was required. That a movement of much greater magnitude developed was not his fault.

Within a week after *Pravda's* fateful editorial, reports in ever-growing numbers were pouring into Moscow describing violent scenes of peasant activity against the wealthier land owners. The old enthusiasm of 1917 returned in full bloom and the estates of the Kulaks were redivided amongst the poorer peasants.

The implications of all this were not lost upon Stalin. He realized that there was still a wide cleavage between the various strata of the agricultural population and also that the more reactionary aspects of the N.E.P. had produced their own nemesis by creating aggressive anti-N.E.P. feelings among the poor peasants. To these latter he addressed himself, explaining the objectives of the Five Year Plan and enlisting their support in carrying it forward. Unlike the proletariat, it was obviously impossible to win the approval of all the peasantry, but Stalin was by now a master at the art of choosing allies from among the disaffected elements of his enemies.

The political representatives of the agricultural communities were gathered together to hear special addresses from Stalin, Kalinin and others on the proposals contained in the agricultural sections of the Plan. Following this they were ordered to proceed to their constituencies and there propagate the new ideas, paying particular attention to those sections most antagonistic to the Kulaks.

Two principal alternatives to the existing system should be explained. The large estates, many of which had lain fallow since 1917, were to be

transformed as they stood into State farms (Sovkhoz), where the direction of the undertaking and the sale of produce were controlled directly by the local government officials. In the Sovkhoz, the peasant would receive wages, plus a bonus on the production of the whole farm. To families who had worked their fingers to the bone for generations in a vain effort to wrest enough food out of a patch of land, the prospect of regular wages and regular hours must have seemed like the realization of a dream.

The Sovkhoz were most successful and most frequently found in the less populous regions, where the yield per hectare was not sufficiently high to permit even a Russian peasant to support his family on the usual tiny patch. Directed by Soviet scientists trained in the Moscow and Leningrad agricultural institutes, and helped by the products of the new chemical industries, many thousands of acres were converted from inferior steppe-land into productive farms.

In order to make the change-over from the old to the new methods as gentle as possible, the Kolkhoz, or Co-operative, was evolved. Two different types of Kolkhoz were projected, the Commune and the Artel.

In the Commune the members own the entire concern on a co-operative basis. They live in communities like the Sovkhozians, but are not paid wages in an absolute sense, but receive their due proportion of the proceeds resulting from the labour of the whole.

The Artel was Stalin's personal contribution to the agricultural scheme of the Plan and came nearest to meeting universal approval. Fully aware that the peasant is by nature desirous of owning some land, however insignificant, Stalin suggested that while the Artel should be conducted on the same scientific lines as the Sovkhoz and Kolkhoz in regard to production, the individual peasant should be permitted to own his own house and a small portion of land adjoining. Here he might grow whatever he wished and if necessary keep a certain amount of livestock. So long as he devoted the required working time to the common task of cultivating the vast area of the Artel, no restrictions whatever were placed on his individuality.

When the harbingers of such revolutionary ideas arrived in the villages, their observations soon aroused the opposition of the Kulaks, who had formerly, by virtue of their wealth, exercised much authority in local affairs. They endeavoured at first to smooth out the difficulties, on the ground that Collectivization was a step forward to true Socialism, but soon became aware that the Kulaks were far more concerned with defending their own privileged position than pursuing abstractions for the general good.

In many districts the local proprietors took the offensive against the proposals of the Five Year Plan and used their money to obstruct the scheme as much as possible. Among the more backward nationalities on the fringes of the U.S.S.R., movements began in which the Kulaks were supported by certain sections of the peasantry, whom they had succeeded in convincing that the inauguration of State farms would mean a return to serfdom, with a Soviet Commissar taking the place of the old landowner.

In these areas movements began which closely resembled the rising in La Vendée against the French Revolution. The Russian peasant reverted

to pre-revolutionary ideas and sank again into the traditional anarchism of Stenka Razin and Pugachev.

Guerilla bands roamed the country districts robbing the new Collectives, destroying their buildings and burning the crops. Without any clear objective they descended into thinly disguised banditry, raiding and killing in the way their Mongolian and Tartar ancestors had done under Tamerlane.

For a long time Stalin remained patient. He knew from bitter experience in Georgia, how difficult it is to bring new ideas to a backward people, and he had a sympathetic regard for the sturdy individualism which resists any act of authority by force. When finally action was forced upon him, he moved with his usual firmness but not until every other avenue had been exhaustively explored.

Over a hundred thousand trained experts were distributed throughout Russia and devoted the greater part of 1930 to an attempt at showing, by example on a small scale, that the new methods were practical and infinitely more productive than the old. In some parts these tactics were successful, in others the peasants reverted to their stock reply. They hoarded their produce in order to exert pressure on the towns by causing a food shortage.

The manoeuvre was already well understood. On Government orders the local authorities requisitioned grain from the individual farmer at a stabilized price. Once again the peasant rejected the velvet glove and stubbornly hung on to his little store. When the exasperated officials were compelled to remove the vital foodstuffs by force, the peasant went one step further and refused to sow for the following year, except for the immediate needs of his own family.

No amount of cajolery or threats sufficed to halt this fatal process. Within six months, an ignorant peasantry undid six years of Stalin's patient work. The graph of agricultural productivity had risen steadily since 1924. In 1930 to 1931 it fell back to its original figure. Rough estimates were supplied in response to the Politbureau's demand for information and revealed a situation more dangerous to the stability of the regime than any amount of political opposition.

Millions of cattle, pigs and sheep were being destroyed at a time when the industrial programme called for rigid conservation of the national wealth, horses were becoming scarce even in the Cossack lands where no other means of transport existed. Having lost his hoard of food and determined not to sow again, the peasant ate his seed to carry him through the winter of 1929-30.

Before the process gathered too great a momentum, Stalin called a sudden halt. He was not blind to the dangers of the situation and did not hesitate to explain to the assembled Central Committee: "Either non-Party peasants and workers must be able to criticize us or we shall be subjected to criticism in the form of insurrection. The Georgian insurrection was such a criticism. So was the Tambov affair. Kronstadt no less.

*Of two things one: either we give up our optimism and bureaucratic methods and allow the right of criticism to those who suffer from our mistakes, or discontent will accumulate and we shall have criticism in the form of insurrection."*

On March 2nd, 1930, over the usual signature, his views were expressed as always without any attempt to gloss over unpleasant reality. This article, headed "Dizzy with Success," was designed not so much to stop

the collectivization, for that would have been a departure from Leninism and therefore unpardonable, but rather as a political retreat to enable the Government to organize its machinery to deal with the unexpected check.

While the Kulak rejoiced that his resistance should have caused the dropping of the new proposals, Stalin was gathering strength for a further attack. This time there was to be no more delay.

In December the retreat was halted as suddenly as it had begun. The Party was prepared to meet any eventuality and determined to reach the goal. In a single decree the entire collectivization of the wheat-producing areas was ordered, together with the partial collectivization of other districts which were allocated definite percentages.

Once again the Kulak resisted, hoping to repeat his earlier success. On direct orders from the Kremlin, the provincial Party leaders answered the new challenge by calling upon the poor peasants to smash the resistance of the new exploiters once and for all. As the Secretariat had calculated, this appeal had an immediate effect.

Bands of loyal peasants carried out the forcible expropriation of the Kulak, placing his land and entire stock at the disposal of the directors of the nearest Collective. As for the ex-landowner and his family, he could either accept the situation and take his place with the others in the Kolkhoz or, if he preferred it, he could remain aloof and survive the winter as best he could.

In the cities, the State was prescribing drastic action in order to obtain maximum results. Absence, inefficiency, drunkenness, resulted in heavy fines, while those whose production was in excess of schedule received additional wages.

From January, 1931, the same conditions were applied to the peasantry. When vagabondage increased as a result of the attempts of disgruntled farm workers to escape to other parts of the country, the State answered in the same vein by issuing internal passports, which had to be presented when travelling or when challenged by the police. For theft and other acts against the communal effort, the death penalty was reinstated on the Statute Book.

All this caused much heart-burnings among the visionary humanitarians of the Western Hemisphere, whose Socialism was of the Robert Owen stamp; not that Stalin concerned himself about such criticism.

By the autumn of 1931, the effect of the Kulak sabotage of 1930 made itself felt. To counteract the tremendous fall in foodstuffs, the State immediately requisitioned one-half of the grain crop, to be used to feed the industrial workers who were entering the final year of the "Five Year Plan in Four Years." What livestock had survived from the year before was also requisitioned and kept in huge compounds in order to keep the consumption of fodder to a minimum and prevent more useless slaughter.

Where resistance persisted in spite of all efforts, the State began the wholesale deportation of treasonous elements and, if necessary, did not hesitate to remove whole villages to Siberia and the Northern wastes.

As it had done many times before, Stalin's training gave him strength to carry on through this period. The man who could pardon Zinoviev and Kamenev, who had three times betrayed him; the leader who let Buharin live in freedom, though Buharin had openly proclaimed a determination to kill him, would stop at nothing where his faith was concerned.



For Leninism, Russia must be collectivized. To Stalin the imperative had only one meaning.

Foreign observers have disagreed in their estimations of the number of people who suffered exile at this time. Mr. H. Walpole, quoted by Souvarine, based his calculations on study of data supplied by the Soviet Commissariat of Works and considered the approximate total to be four to five million souls; most other commentators range from two to six millions.

Transfers of population on such a scale must of necessity cause much suffering and the world Press gave harrowing accounts of the terrible plight of the weary families, uprooted from their homes and sent in cattle trucks to an unfamiliar land. The spectacle is certainly appalling and gives rise to renewed questionings as to whether any objective, however high, can justify such ruthlessness. Stalin has not denied the extent of the sacrifices, he considers them more than excused by the magnificent and beneficial results of the Plans.

From 1931 until late in 1932, the agricultural resources of the country touched rock bottom. The stubborn resistance of the Kulak had created an artificial famine and presented the Soviet with its most urgent problem since the Civil War.

Thanks to the steadfastness of Stalin and his capacity for ruthless action, the danger was already passed by the end of 1932. Progress was still slow and the marks of Kulak sabotage were to remain on the Russian countryside for many years more, but the corner was definitely past and an era of improvement began.

Throughout 1933, the Sovkhoz and Kolkhoz gradually surmounted their initial difficulties and increased their output beyond the expectations of their own leaders. The production of cotton doubled within two years of collectivization of the primitive plantations, while the grain output, of which three-quarters had formerly been supplied by individual peasants, rose to the highest recorded figure of 150 thousand million poods, of which six-sevenths were derived from the new State farms.

As the benefits inherent in large-scale agricultural planning made themselves more obvious, the tempo of collectivization increased. Whereas in the period 1917 to 1928 only 2 per cent of the total arable land was tilled by collective farmers, in the two years 1929-30 the percentage had risen to 60.

Visitors to the Russia of the 'twenties had commented upon the shortage of those small manufactured articles which are so commonplace in the West as to pass almost unnoticed. To them it seemed as if the Soviet was so concerned with colossal projects that it had no time to provide buttons, tin tacks, pins and similar utilities.

By 1930 it was no longer necessary, as one commentator remarked, "to wait two hours for a pair of shoe laces or three days for an overcoat." In a country where statistics are rightly considered essential to economic progress, no figures are available for this small-scale industry, the successes of which did as much to improve the lot of the average citizen as all the electrical plant, canals or drainage schemes.

The State had been forced in 1926 to obtain foreign currency or gold by authorizing special Torgsin shops, where goods which were unobtainable for roubles could be bought at high prices in Valuta. By 1934 these last vestiges of capitalism were rapidly disappearing.

In 1934 also, Molotov announced over the Moscow radio: "The Soviet now possesses 283,000 State shops and its resources as regards commodities as important as bread have risen to unheard-of proportions. The hour has come to announce as a great new victory of the Soviet policy, the general and free scale of bread and flour." To the peoples of Western Europe such an announcement seems trivial compared to the building of Magnitogorsk or Dneprostroi, but to the Soviet housewife, after six years of weary bread queues, the concession must have made a grand finale to the Five Year Plans.

## CHAPTER VII

### CALM BEFORE THE STORM

IN THE YEARS 1928 TO 1934 SOVIET RUSSIA PASSED THROUGH THE FIRES AND emerged greater and more secure than ever; from 1934 to 1938 she enjoyed a brief summer of peace and prosperity. For the first time the New State felt itself sufficiently free from immediate dangers to permit of considered attempts to organize the social and cultural life of the 140 million souls living in the U.S.S.R. In these few years the Bolshevik Government made its first tentative steps towards the ideal society which is the ultimate aim of Communism.

The immediate effect of the Revolution of 1917 had been an outburst of emotional "modernism." Though the old Bolsheviks themselves set examples of simplicity and austerity, they felt compelled to destroy not only the economic pillars of the old society, but also its moral and spiritual buttresses.

"Religion is the opium of the people," Lenin had explained long before 1917, though his opinion was influenced more by hatred of the economic power of the landowning clergy than by any particular objection to the actual teachings of Christ. This view has persisted to the present day, except that, now that the old financial power of the Church is gone, Stalin looks at religion more tolerantly than his predecessor. If the Russian peasant wishes to worship his traditional icons, the State does not deny him the right to do so, but concentrates its energy on materialistic educational methods directed against the mystical content of the Orthodox Creed.

By 1930 the churches and other kindred structures had passed into general use as municipal buildings, community centres, schools—in short to anything to which they could be accommodated.

As a further outcome of the "October Days," the old marriage laws were discarded and various experimental alternatives tried. Here again the Bolsheviks were objecting, not to the idea of marriage, but to the fact that the implied subservience of a woman to her husband was a denial of the principle of absolute equality of the sexes which the Party incorporated in its programmes.

Until 1934, a Russian man and woman were deemed to have married once they had made a joint declaration to a minor Government official, stating their intention to live together. Should one party or the other subsequently wish to dissolve the partnership, this could be done by another declaration, this time to an official of the "Divorce Bureau."

Once the heyday atmosphere of 1917 had passed, the years of internal

struggle kept Stalin and his associates from dealing with any question except the all-pervading need to fight for existence.

By 1932, however, the General Secretary made no secret of his disapproval of the existing marriage regulations. "Postcard divorces" were growing to alarming proportions and the People's Courts were overwhelmed with routine adjudications as to the custody and maintenance of the children of these dissolved unions. As a result of Stalin's personal pressure, the Politbureau tightened up the law of marriage and divorce in an effort to revive the idea of permanent association between man and wife which is the most satisfactory way of ensuring stability in personal relationships.

For similar reasons the old law, whereby abortion could be demanded as a right by any woman, was modified in order to permit the operation only when the mother was medically unfit for childbirth.

More important than these extravagances, which after all affected only a tiny minority, the Stalin Government was called upon to alleviate the shocking housing conditions prevalent in the big industrial centres.

The Five Year Plan had concentrated on industrial progress with such success that new towns had risen almost in a night, while the old industrial centres had been expanded far beyond their former size. Unfortunately, the necessity for rapid industrialization had prevented the State from effectively attacking the problem of housing.

In every city throughout the Union a chronic shortage of houses had been making itself felt through the appeals and suggestions of working-class organizations. Happy, indeed, was the Moscow family of three or four persons which possessed a single room to itself. More often than not it would share a room with another family, using the kitchen and cooking facilities in common with the rest of the building.

Until such time as it could successfully resolve the question, the Government had to improvise. Several families would occupy an old church hall, living on a communal basis; the big houses of the former wealthy classes were divided into sleeping accommodation, while the tenants were fed at a nearby Government canteen.

Methods such as these were temporary expedients, and the Five Year Plan had already taken the first tentative steps towards a solution. Great new housing estates were built round Leningrad, Moscow and the main Russian towns in much the same manner as in European countries. While not up to Western standards, these workers' flats were certainly a tremendous improvement on the conditions prevailing before.

In discussing the question of accommodation in 1934, Stalin promised to maintain the rate of house building, and expressed the hope that every Soviet family should soon be living under its own roof. "We have built in the last fifteen years," he said later, "more houses than any other nation in the world. But we inherited such terrible conditions from the Czarist regime, when virtually only the wealthy families had houses, that we are faced with the task of rehousing almost the entire population."

Concurrently with their housing legislation, the Bolsheviks concentrated on raising the educational and cultural standard of the people to Western levels. In a country which in 1917 was 85 per cent illiterate, thousands of primary and secondary schools were instituted in the best available accommodation, pending the construction of modern buildings.

The first Soviet Commissar for Education, Lunacharsky ("dilettante, prattler and muddler-in-chief," if we can believe Stalin), was relieved of his post in 1929, to make room for Bubnov, an old Army associate of Stalin and Voroshilov. In place of the wordy theories of Lunacharsky, a rigid system of compulsory education was begun by his successor.

Stalin's comments, following the change in the Educational Commissariat, are of interest as showing his common-sense attitude to controversial questions. He attacked the pet theory of Lunacharsky and Bogdanov that the working class must discard everything that had gone before and start from scratch to build "a proletarian culture of its own" and laid down the following principle: "We must use the achievement of the old culture without its implications. Since culture is largely the product of human experience we must not fail to extract the best from it, even if its social origin is tainted."

Fully aware that the tremendous turnover in the Russian population meant the increasing influence of the young, Stalin has always insisted upon giving children prior claim to the new facilities. The Census of 1936 showed an annual increase of 3 million "lives" a year, while of the entire population 43 per cent had been born in the nineteen years since the Revolution.

As an essential part of the Planning Commission's industrial programme, technical schools and training centres increased greatly during the first two Plans, a process which was later reflected in the improved standards of manufactured goods throughout the country.

With his close knowledge of Georgia and specialized study of the National Question, Stalin himself was largely responsible for the cultural campaign in the provinces. Great difficulties had to be surmounted. Over 90 per cent of the adult population had forgotten its alphabet, while in many of the remoter areas the languages spoken were so completely local that they had never been written. Stalin, Ordjonikidze and others best acquainted with the rural population, decided that the cinematograph offered the simplest and most direct method of approach to the adult peasants.

As an example of how this campaign was conducted, the Scottish Labour M.P., Jennie Lee, quoted an incident which occurred during her tour of Georgia and the Caucasus. For generations, the mothers of the province had trussed up their children's limbs in bandages to make them grow straight, in much the same way as the Chinese formerly bound the feet of female infants to develop a dainty foot. To make matters worse, local tradition prescribed feeding the child on a gruel made principally of cabbage water. Attempts to rear children on modern methods were not popular and one young mother had been stoned for her pains. To counteract this opposition, a film unit toured the district illustrating pictorially the development of a baby reared by the old method contrasted with the new.

Examples such as this could be multiplied at length to show the salutary effect of careful propaganda in breaking down old prejudices and inculcating new principles.

Also among Stalin's contributions to the new spirit were certain far-reaching improvements in working conditions generally. During the first Plans, factories were generally run on a two-shift system of twelve hours each, but as a result of the improvements made, the working day was reduced to seven hours. Subsequent developments in the foreign situation

raised it to eight hours in 1936, though even this was a tremendous step forward from the days when Vissarion Djughashvili had crouched over his cobbler's last for sixteen hours a day.

During the upheavals of 1917 to 1924, the Bolsheviks had relied for much of their power in the country upon the support given them by the workmen's committees of the various factories. Stalin himself, in Baku and Tiflis, had been in close personal contact with the working-men's associations there and was well aware of the strength to be derived from their continued approbation.

Under his guidance, the Plans delegated an increased share in factory direction to the workmen's committees, whose representatives must be consulted by the management before any changes were introduced.

From 1934 onwards further improvements were made. Facilities for technical and cultural studies under State-appointed teachers were freely granted to any student who was prepared to devote the necessary time to such work. In this way Stalin continued his old methods of having, in every factory, supporters who understood his ideas and could explain their significance to the more backward elements.

One further point remains to be recorded. The Russian peasant and workman, who had formerly been tied to his patch of land or factory bench until the end of his days, was granted two weeks' holiday a year with full pay. This concession was only recently granted in England after widespread agitation extending over a number of years. In Russia of 1934 it must have represented an unthought-of luxury.

During the summer months, special trains carried workmen and their families to the Caucasian Riviera and the beauty spots of the Crimea. The former haunts of an idle aristocracy, even their ancient palaces and villas, were reconstructed to provide accommodation for as many as possible of the new visitors.

By enactments like these Stalin shows more clearly than by words how closely he is bound up with the Russian working class from which he sprang, how well he knows their desires, their prejudices and their strength. Good treatment of workpeople can increase factory production to an amazing degree, a fact which Stalin has always appreciated. It may even be true that the decision of many European industrial combines to confer similar benefits on their employees was based upon the Russian example—although Stalin himself would probably not welcome the compliment.

For once the Russians had a ruler who inspired their affection. Others they had feared, some respected, but never loved in the sense in which they love Stalin. Even for Lenin, their feelings were more of respect than admiration, an early death intervened before his real worth had time to penetrate from the minds of the Russian people into their hearts.

Many foreign Press correspondents have remarked on the extravagant praises lavished on Stalin by his people. Indeed, to Western minds, this tendency to immoderate applause seems servile and insincere. In reality it is the exact opposite.

The peoples of the outlying provinces of Russia are, even now, emerging for the first time from an era of backwardness and repression which has not changed in essentials since the reign of Ivan the Terrible. They are experiencing not only a new happiness but, far more important, a new hope. Their children grow to healthy manhood. Infant mortality, which

before 1914 was the highest in Europe, had fallen to below that of Spain, Austria and Roumania by 1936. They are no longer at the mercy of a capricious climate, living in plenty in good years only to die of "flu" the first bad harvest.

The old reactionary control which the Church maintained on spiritual and intellectual life, had been broken officially in 1917, by 1934 it was being replaced by modern educational methods directed at both children and adults.

With such stirring events going on around them, it becomes understandable why the provincial peoples lauded Stalin to the skies. For them he was, in sober fact, a deliverer and a saviour. They reacted in the way their fathers had done to the heroism of Stenka Razin, after whose murder in 1671 they had canonized in song and story.

In a similar situation the Scandinavian countries had perpetuated their adoration of the old Norse heroes in Skalds and Sagas, explaining their great deeds by the myth of divine origin. In Uzbekistan and Turkestan, from the hills of Armenia to the rolling steppes of the Kirghiz, a simple people, unable to write and not yet versed in the Western art of half-hearted approbation, celebrated their worship of the new saviour in the only way they knew.

They wove songs around his revolutionary deeds and elevated him above the common herd to a place among their traditional heroes and demigods.

It is easy enough to be contemptuous of such primitive outbursts, but without understanding of Stalin's place in his peoples' hearts, his ability to carry out the most ruthless adjustments without causing revolution will always remain a mystery.

Precisely because he learned in the years of the Plans that he possessed the absolute trust of the Russian masses, Stalin has been able to keep the Soviet State intact through two decades of the most unsettled century in world history.

At the World Congress of Writers, held in Moscow in 1935, the poet Avdeyenko, who a few years before had toiled from dawn to dusk on a primitive farm, attempted to explain his own reaction to the personality of Stalin in the words: "My wife expects her first child. The first words it shall learn to utter shall be the name, Stalin."

From a representative selection of similar adulations, the first American newspaper correspondent to interview Stalin, Eugene Lyons, gives the following naïve poem written by a peasant woman from Daghestan:

Above the valley  
The mountain peak  
Above the peak  
The sky.  
But Stalin,  
Skies have no height  
To equal you,  
Only your thoughts  
Rise higher.  
The stars, the moon  
Pale before the sun  
That pales in turn  
Before your shining mind.

There is a distinctly religious fervour about many of these panegyrics, as witness the Uzbek poem which *Pravda* translated into Russian:

Oh, great Stalin, Oh leader of the peoples.  
Thou who broughtest men to birth,  
Thou who fructifiest the earth,  
Thou who restorest the centuries,  
Thou who makest bloom the Spring,  
Thou who makest vibrate the musical chords  
Thou splendour of my spring, Oh thou  
Sun reflected by millions of hearts.

How many modern rulers could inspire such sentiments among an unsophisticated and sincere people? How many are so closely bound in their subjects as this one-time village lad, of whom one delegate to the Soviet Congress said: "At the moment I saw our beloved father, Stalin, I lost consciousness. The hurrahs resounded for a long time and it was probably this noise that brought me to my senses. You must excuse me, comrades, if, finding myself in such a state of bewilderment at the sight of Comrade Stalin, I did not salute him."

Though essentially a modest and sober-minded person, Stalin is justifiably proud that he should be so much revered, especially by the peoples of those very nations to whom the Central Russian authority had formerly been a bitter enemy.

Alongside this pride, however, he is quick to detect false praise from the genuine article. No one indulged in more extravagant flattery than Zinoviev and Kamenev. Each time they were caught out in treachery, they burst into paeans of praise in order (as Zinoviev put it) "to crawl back into the Party on our bellies." They were even foolish enough to imagine that, because Stalin forgave them time after time, they were successfully hoodwinking him. It needed the Treason Trials of 1936 to 1938 to show them the real truth.

Buharin also followed the same path, hoping to gloss over his political deviations to the Right, and declared: "The iron hand of the workers' most remarkable guide, the Commander-in-chief of millions of men, whose name is the symbol of grandiose Five Year Plans, of gigantic struggles and victories, Stalin."

With Buharin as with the others, Stalin demanded deeds first and praises afterwards. Nevertheless while he scornfully rejects the dishonest fawnings of his adversaries, he is entitled to feel proud of the veneration and trusting sincerity of less subtle but more reliable comrades, who reverence him for what he has achieved and for the ideas he defends:

The house we dwell in shall not fade  
Foundations were by Lenin laid;  
This house, we know, shall stand,  
'Twas made  
By you, the cosmic builder Stalin.

Alongside the rapid improvement in the social and economic condition of the Russian people, came a similar development in the international field. Years before, Marx had shown that a nation's foreign policy is a direct reflection of its internal affairs; from 1935 the era of reconstruction and

domestic peace within Russia became translated into the "Popular Front" period of external relations with the capitalist world.

As early as the middle of 1932, Stalin had expressed the view that the position of the U.S.S.R., *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world, had changed radically since the Civil War period. The obvious stability of the Soviet had convinced even its bitterest enemies that no hopes existed of overthrowing the new State, except as a result of a full-scale war extending over several years. None of the imperialist nations, however, was in any position to undertake such a sustained campaign, they were all in the throes of a deepening depression.

On these grounds, Stalin argued that the old conception of Bolshevik Russia standing alone in a violently hostile world, was no longer valid and needed immediate modification. Now that the European Powers were openly anxious to co-operate with Russia in an attempt to relieve their own distress, and because the Soviet no longer needed to attack world trade by "dumping," a new orientation of foreign relations began.

Starting from Russia's obvious need for an era of peace to complete her reconstruction programme, Stalin considered the time opportune for her to enter into agreements with those capitalist countries whose interest lay in the same direction. In place of the old conceptions of traditional Bolshevism, which lumped the capitalist Powers together irrespective of their internal regime or their foreign policy, Stalin divided the nations into "peace-loving Capitalisms and war-mongering Capitalisms." In the first camp he placed those Powers who possessed colonies and preferred to maintain the Versailles system; among the warmongers were the countries which were defeated in the 1914 war and which now demanded the abrogation of Versailles and the readjustment of Europe.

Chief of the peaceful nations stood Britain, France, the U.S.A. and the small States which had been created at Versailles, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, and the Balkan Entente. Opposed to them stood the revisionist Powers, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Japan. Italy, whose foreign policy in 1932 consisted of jockeying between the orbit of Britain and that of Germany, was not included in the pattern.

From this summing up Stalin went on to demonstrate that, only since revision of Versailles would mean war and a resulting threat to the U.S.S.R., Russia should throw her weight on the side of Britain and France to maintain the European *status quo* by the simple expedient of threatening any aggressor with attack from overwhelmingly superior forces.

In order to allay the suspicions of those bourgeois politicians who suspected him of some deep-seated treachery, Stalin calmly began to set his own house in order. As a preliminary to an alliance with the democratic capitalisms, the Communist International was instructed to tone down its super-revolutionary propaganda in the friendly countries and concentrate its attack upon those nations who opposed the new Russian alignment.

Once more Stalin had to face a storm of criticism. The ultra-Left sections of the Comintern attacked him as the "grave-digger of the Revolution," because he made no secret of a determination never to jeopardize the security of the U.S.S.R. by rash attempts to stimulate revolution in other countries. The customary stream of quotations from Lenin were levelled at the Secretariat, which replied by demonstrating that Lenin's demands for world-wide revolution were made to deter a hostile



world from attacking Russia, by the threat of internal upheaval. This assessment of the situation had obviously been modified greatly since Lenin's death. In the present state of Europe, to attempt to meddle in the internal affairs of other countries would be suicidal and would merely serve to involve the Communist State in war.

As he had with his economic policy, Stalin boldly declared his intention to throw the whole weight of the U.S.S.R. on the side of Collective Security, no matter what the effect might be on the ultimate World Revolution, which the dreamers seemed more anxious to defend than the reality of Socialism in Russia. In 1932, the Soviet Government took the first steps along the new road by signing pacts of non-aggression with Poland and Roumania.

An added impulse was given the Popular Front movement in 1933, when the National Socialist Party seized power in Germany. Immediately began the turgid series of violent threats against the Versailles Treaty and against Bolshevism which were almost the only subjects upon which the new Reichs Chancellor had any real policy.

While Hitler was murdering the German Socialist movement, Stalin's line was again proven correct. France, terrified by the threat of a new and greater war, turned towards the Soviet Union for assistance. From this appeal the Franco-Soviet Mutual Assistance Pact was born.

Recognizing that Nazi Germany represented the greatest enemy of the working classes of Europe, Stalin and the French Government opened negotiations. In return for the promise of French help if Hitler should attack Russia, the Communist Party of France abandoned its revolutionary policy and gave its support to the Government. So important was the change-over that it was soon to bring to power the progressive Popular Front Government of Léon Blum, which, under Communist influence, did more to improve the lot of the French working classes than any other.

From the new rapprochement with France came Russia's next step. In 1934 the Soviet entered the League of Nations, and through its representative, Maxim Litvinov, became the most outspoken champion of the principle of Collective Security.

By the Five Year Plans Stalin had assumed personal control over Russia's internal policy, now, through the Popular Front, he began the direction of her foreign policy also. With characteristic plain speaking, he made no pretence of seeking "peace for the sake of peace," nor did he hypocritically admire the social system of his allies. Lenin had once described the League of Nations as a "thieves kitchen," Stalin joined it after clearly explaining that he needed the help of the more respectable thieves against the violent robberies of Nazism and Fascism.

When Litvinov reported that no amount of verbal appeals could effectively bring about general disarmament, Stalin immediately invited the French Foreign Minister to Moscow and gave him in plain words the approval of the Soviet Union and also the assistance of the French Left. "M. Stalin fully understands and approves the policy of national defence pursued by France to maintain its armed forces at the level of security," reported the diplomat on his return to Paris.

Some indication of the widespread interest aroused outside Russia by Stalin's emergence as the directing force of Soviet policy, is given by the personal visit of Roy Howard, chief of the powerful Scripps-Howard newspaper syndicate of the U.S.A. Howard came to Moscow expecting to have

to worm his way through clouds of words, in the customary manner, to get at the basic motives of the new Russian policy.

To his frank surprise, he was received by Stalin in friendly fashion and given an unvarnished statement of the true reasons behind the Popular Front movement. He laughed at the American's suggestion that the Soviet was abandoning its old idea of fostering revolution. "We never had any such idea," he said, "export of revolution is nonsense. Each country, if it so desires, will make its own revolution; *without such desire there will be no revolution.* If you think the Soviet Union has any desire to alter by force the social systems of the surrounding States you are sadly mistaken." When the astonished Howard replied that there had obviously been a tragic misunderstanding on the point, the Soviet chief remarked: "Not tragic so much as tragi-comic," and went on to quote Robespierre's remark: "The wildest idea that can enter the head of any politician is to think that it is sufficient for a nation to carry its arms among other nations to make them adopt its own laws and constitutions. *No one loves armed missionaries.*"

In 1935 Collective Security received its first serious test. Mussolini invaded Abyssinia.

Litvinov invoked the League of Nations agreement and demanded prompt action against the aggressor. Faced with such a definite task, the League Powers hesitated for a considerable time, in the hope that Italian ambitions could be settled quickly by some kind of agreement with Haile Selassie. When, however, the situation was already as good as lost, they decided to apply sanctions against Italy. Stalin watched the shilly-shallying and hesitation in silence, and did not fail to draw the true inferences.

The Popular Front policy continued into 1936, gaining increased support among the progressive elements throughout Europe. In France, Léon Blum was moving irresistibly into power as head of a Left coalition, backed by powerful Communist support. In England, the small British Communist Party devoted its Press and propaganda to demands for energetic action against the encroachment of Fascism on the Continent. In Spain, the semi-Fascist Government of Gil Robles was replaced by a United Front of the Socialist and Communist Parties.

This situation was not to continue long. In July, 1936, the forces of reaction took up the challenge, General Franco rose against the Spanish Government and led his Moorish armies into the peninsula. For two years Stalin was to watch Collective Security in action.

The democratic Powers instituted the so-called "non-intervention agreement," whereby the conflict should be strictly confined to Spain, and the two combatants allowed to settle the issue alone. Stalin suppressed his misgivings and loyally implemented the agreement.

By 1937, however, it became obvious to the Russians that "non-intervention" was in reality a policy of discrimination against the Spanish Government. While France and Britain stood sanctimoniously on the sidelines, Mussolini and Hitler were openly assisting Franco with aircraft, munitions and increasing numbers of "volunteer soldiers." Subsequent events have proved the accuracy of the reports sent to the Bolshevik leader by one of his observers in Spain, to the effect that the Fascist Powers were using the war to test out their military equipment and to train selected troops in the methods of modern warfare.

Still Stalin hesitated to depart from the principles of the League to which he had pinned his hopes of an era of peace. As week succeeded week, it became obvious that the Governments of Britain and France were prepared to give nothing to the Spanish people except advice. Once Stalin was convinced of this, he declared the intention of the Soviet State to give all the help it could to the Spanish Loyalists.

It was not Stalin's fault, but the crime of the Anglo-French politicians, that Fascism extended its slimy clutches from Italy and Germany into the Iberian peninsula. Factors of distance and transport made it impossible to give to the Popular Front Government of Largo Caballero, assistance equal to that the Fascists were according Franco.

The heroism of the International Brigades in the battles before Madrid, form one of democracy's finest examples of devotion to the ideal of freedom, but flesh and blood could not resist the hail of high explosives and the weight of metal indefinitely. Internal weaknesses appeared in the structure of the Popular Front.

The numerically large Anarchist Federations proved incapable of governing the areas under their control, while the Trotskyist P.O.U.M. deliberately abandoned its sector of the Aragon front in order to attempt an insurrection in Barcelona. To make matters worse, the Soviet military specialists, sent by Stalin to organize the People's Armies, met obstruction and petty jealousy from certain responsible Socialist leaders, including Largo Caballero, who refused to permit the construction of trenches in the principal cities as a defence against air attack, on the grounds that such a procedure was not in keeping with the dignity of a free people.

Nevertheless, in spite of the victory of Fascist reaction, Stalin's policy in Spain won for him the admiration and sympathy of the mass of the European proletariat; a factor which must assume tremendous significance when suffering and oppression have driven the European peoples to revolt. In Spain itself, everything Russian became an object of reverence and trust, a state of mind which Franco can suppress but cannot eradicate.

Ludwig Renn, one of the ablest military experts which pre-Hitler Germany produced, served in Spain as director of one of the Government training academies for officers. After the defeat, he recorded the faith inspired by Stalin's example there. Where confusion and disagreement existed among the Loyalists, Russian advice was invariably accepted by both parties. To illustrate this confidence in Russia, Renn describes the wearisome delays experienced in travelling through the Spanish battle area, when passes had to be inspected at every road junction. On one occasion, exasperated by frequent halts, he instructed his chauffeur to repeat "Russian Officer" to the challenging sentries—he was never stopped again.

Though it struggled on to the final débacle of Munich, Collective Security died the day General Franco became Caudillo of Spain. Stalin had received an object-lesson in democratic apathy which was later to result in the Soviet-German pact of 1939. What faith he had left in the Chamberlains and the Deladiers after the Abyssinian episode, failed to survive the sorry spectacle of the Non-intervention Agreement.

The democracies seemed incapable of checking the advance of Fascism, while powerful interests in England and France made no secret of their hope that the inevitable Nazi outburst would be directed towards the East, thus conveniently destroying the twin bugbears of Fascism and Bolshevism.



DEATH TO THE TRAITORS  
Stalin signs a death warrant, 1933

But Stalin differed radically from the Anglo-French politicians of the period. He had not ceased to be a realist, nor had he lost the ability to assess errors and correct mistakes. The short-lived heyday of peaceful relations was clearly past. Once again the Soviet Union must take stock of its position and build up its own resources to meet the armed attack of Hitlerism.

Stalin turned from the "cultural front" to clear the Soviet deck for action.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CLEARING THE DECKS

#### 1. *The Purges*

THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SOVIET UNION WOULD EVENTUALLY BE FORCED into a European war, presented Stalin with more serious problems than the Governments of the capitalist States.

The German Socialist, Karl Kautsky, who, until his break with Lenin in the pre-war years, had been the acknowledged theorist of the original Social Democratic Party, had discussed the question of the participation of a Socialist State in war. Observations derived from study of the short-lived Paris Commune of 1871 led Kautsky to declare unequivocally: "War is not the proletariat's strong point."

Stalin, however, took the dogmatic statement of Kautsky and showed it to be a generalization based on a misreading of the history of revolutions in general and the Paris Commune in particular. According to Stalin's thesis, the defeat of the Communards was not due to inability to wage war, indeed, "who but the working class does the fighting in all wars?" The reason for failure in 1871 lay entirely in the lack of cohesion among the various leaders and in their refusal to agree on a common policy. As far as the Parisian citizens were concerned, they endured months of siege and finally surrendered only when starvation and the dissensions of their generals made defeat an absolute certainty.

For a man of Stalin's temperament, to sit weakly down before the barrier of imperialist war was inconceivable; years of practical experience reassured him as to the fighting qualities of the Russian peasant and workman. A nation which, in its infancy, had throttled the hydra of Allied intervention and Civil War need not fear the consequences of a new aggression.

Nevertheless serious dangers did exist. The Kerensky revolution of February, 1917, showed clearly that a nation, exhausted and disillusioned by a long war, may sometimes change its government without troubling too much to analyse the exact programme of the new rulers. Further proof of this was provided by the October Revolution, where Stalin had himself succeeded in enlisting the support of the peasant masses for the Bolshevik Party, simply because only the Bolsheviks guaranteed to stop the terrible agony of war. The columns of *Pravda* in the summer months of 1917, demonstrated how a shrewd political leader could utilize anti-war sentiment in his favour without necessarily possessing a policy which offered anything better than the old.

With the implications of 1917 deeply ingrained in his mind, Stalin

seriously contemplated the dangers to the Soviet State arising from the existence of the secretly hostile ex-Oppositionists.

The animosity of the World Press has created a picture of a ruthless and bloodthirsty Stalin murdering his erstwhile colleagues, presumably for no better reason than to strengthen his own personal power. Short-sighted leader-writers began to talk about the "Soviet Chingiz Khan," while facetious editors gave their approval to cartoons depicting the "Soviet Opposition Benches" as a graveyard.

In reality, Stalin hesitated for many months before embarking on the famous "Purges." He was too deeply conscious of the seriousness of Lenin's death-bed warning as to the dangers which would arise if one section of the Party condemned its opponents to death. Even when Zinoviev had whispered his plan to assassinate Trotsky, Stalin had refused to embark on that fatal policy of self-murder which had destroyed the French revolutionary Jacobins.

Across these meditations, the Oppositionists themselves drew a line of blood.

On December 1st, 1934, a young Communist named Nikolayev, politely requested an interview with the Leningrad Party chief. Kirov apparently imagined his subordinate had some personal trouble to discuss and admitted him to his private office. Without a word, Nikolayev produced a revolver and Kirov fell with a bullet between his eyes.

At first the incident was thought to be the work of Czarist plotters, until the secret police began to check back along Nikolayev's career. From a remarkable diary, in which he had recorded his mental reflections over a period of several years, it became evident that the assassin was one of those young Communist students in whose support Trotsky had so much faith. As a result of the ex-War Commissar's attacks on the alleged "incompetence of the Old Bolsheviks," coupled with subtle flattery of the student youth, Nikolayev came to regard himself as a potential leader of the Russian millions, prevented from taking his rightful place by the machinations of the older Party heads.

The rising popularity of Kirov in Leningrad, where he had succeeded Zinoviev, drew on his head the unbalanced jealousy of Nikolayev and caused him to be singled out as the means whereby the murderer should satisfy his ego and win the martyrdom his tortured mind desired.

Early in 1935, Henry Yagoda, chief of the G.P.U., placed full details of the crime before his chief, demonstrating beyond doubt that the general ideas of the Trotskyist Opposition had been the cause of Nikolayev's deed and also that Zinoviev and Kamenev had actually been aware that some such murder was being planned.

In face of overwhelming evidence, Stalin hesitated no longer. Zinoviev, Kamenev and ninety-five other responsible leaders of the Opposition were brought from prison or from the subordinate positions they had occupied since their last betrayal, and put on trial on charges of moral responsibility for the murder of Kirov.

As an illustration of the depth to which the former friends of Trotsky had descended, the pathetic "Diary of Nikolayev" was read in open court before the assembled representatives of the World Press. From the confused phrases and wild statements, the audience was presented with a picture of the half-crazed youth, flattered by the feigned friendship of Zinoviev

into believing that only the malevolent hatred of Kirov was preventing his rise to power. From the diary also was shown that the blow against the Leningrad leader was intended as the first of many which had as their triumphal climax the sacrifice of Stalin himself.

Once again the schemers saved their skins by shifting the blame to the absent Trotsky and by swearing solemnly to cease all future activity against the Government. For the fourth time Stalin accepted their recantation with a magnanimity that must have seemed misplaced to the millions of Russian citizens, who vociferously demanded the execution of the traitors. Smiling secretly, the accused returned to their places of exile to resume the old game of waiting for a more suitable chance to strike. Surely some such opportunity would arise; perhaps the next Nikolayev would succeed in killing the hated General Secretary and so prepare their way back to power.

For a further year the scheming continued uninterrupted, but in August, 1936, Yagoda announced the completion of his investigation and disclosed full proof of new and even more despicable treason. Even Stalin's patience was exhausted. Zinoviev and Kamenev were brought from their confinement at Verkhne-Uralsk and confronted with the evidence contained in the G.P.U. dossiers. As usual, the two admitted the charges and threw themselves on Stalin's mercy, which had saved them on so many previous occasions.

In the interval Stalin had been forced to listen to the arguments of Yagoda, who had none of his Chief's reverence for the "old associates of Lenin." To continue to pardon such perjured liars was, in Yagoda's eyes, not strength but blind sentimentality and would assuredly lead to more plots and more assassinations of indispensable leaders.

As proof of the real worth of the repeated servilities and confessions, the G.P.U. presented extracts from the celebrated "Letter of an Old Bolshevik." This document, comprising some two hundred pages of minute handwriting, was intercepted by the police in transit from its author, an exiled Oppositionist, to sympathizers in Moscow. In one remarkable passage the writer deals with the confessions and the promises of future loyalty, in a manner illustrative of the moral and physical degradation to which the enemies of Stalin had descended.

"In former times," the Letter declares, "we 'politicals' used to observe a moral code in relation to the Government. It was regarded as a crime to petition for clemency. Anyone who descended to this was finished politically. There is quite a different attitude nowadays. To plead for pardon has become a common phenomenon, on the argument that as the Party in power is 'my Party,' the rules which applied in the Czarist days are no longer valid. At the same time it is considered quite proper, consistently to deceive 'my Party,' since the Party does not fight its intellectual opponents by trying to convince them but by the use of force. This has given rise to a special kind of morality, which allows one to accept any conditions, to sign any undertakings, with the premeditated intention not to keep to the agreement. *This new morality has had a very demoralizing effect among the ranks of the Oppositionists.* The border line between what is and what is not admissible has become completely obliterated."

With such materials to his hand, Yagoda convinced Stalin that an example must be made of the wretched Zinoviev and Kamenev as a deterrent to their supporters.



Immediately the accused realized that for once their promises were to have no effect, they frantically tried to purchase their miserable lives by implicating others, revealing in the process a carefully organized plot against the sovereignty of the Soviet State. By these means they succeeded only in hardening the resolution of Stalin, who saw them at last for what they really were.

Armed with the new disclosures, and with Stalin's approval, Yagoda opened the "Trial of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre," better known to the Western reader from the newspaper headline, "The Trial of the Sixteen." In the dock with Zinoviev and Kamenev, stood many whose former achievements had marked them for positions of importance and trust, before the poison of Trotskyism had entered their minds. Ivan Smirnov and Mirachovsky, colleagues of Trotsky in the Civil War, the Armenian Ter-Vaganian and the ex-chief of Trotsky's bodyguard, Dreitzer, stood in the dock beside the remnants of the Zinoviev faction, Yevdokimov, Rheingold and Bakayev.

As the trial progressed, searching cross-examination by Vyshinsky brought to the surface a veritable maze of underground plots. Not only Kirov but also the entire personnel of the Politbureau, with the unexplained exception of Molotov, were scheduled for the knife or the bullet of an assassin. Regular channels of communication with the exiled Trotsky, whose advice was to be obtained on all points, were exposed. Letters from the former War Commissar were produced as proof that he had given the actual order to assassinate Stalin. Trotsky replied in the foreign Press, denying the charges and accusing Zinoviev of trying to curry favour with Stalin by lying as to the source of his instructions.

With deadly insistence, Vyshinsky beat down the feeble protests of the accused. One after another the men who had set personal ambitions above their country and had boldly planned to take the lives of others, confessed their part in the conspiracy and begged the State to spare their lives.

If Stalin needed further proof of the security of this Government, he received it in the universal outcry against the projected attempt on his life. From factories and villages came thousands of resolutions demanding death for the traitors, while hostile crowds besieged the court, screaming insults whenever the accused appeared. One of the principal Opposition leaders, the ex-Trade Union President, Tomsy, was so staggered by the volume of protest and universal condemnation that he committed suicide.

After a four-day trial, all sixteen accused were found guilty and sentenced to death. Faced with such an ignominious fate, the majority recovered somewhat from the cringing fear they had shown at the trial and died bravely. Only Zinoviev broke down completely. One of his gaolers later described the scene which terminated the career of the "associate of Lenin," the one-time "boss" of Leningrad and the maker of violent speeches to the workers of the world.

On the morning of his execution, Zinoviev refused to rise and tore his clothing to shreds when his guards came to remove him. He was carried screaming into the courtyard to face a firing squad, but was so prostrate with terror that he could not stand. To end the distressing scene the officer of the guard seized the pyjama-clad figure by the hair and, dragging the head down forward, shot him through the neck.

Zinoviev had lied for the last time.

In the course of his investigations and assisted by the confessions of the deceased, Yagoda had unearthed further clues involving still other leaders of the Opposition, who had ostensibly acknowledged their errors and made their peace with Stalin. Six months after the execution of the "Sixteen," a new batch of prisoners faced the judges on charges of having organized an "anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre."

Popularly known as the "Trial of the Seventeen," the new disclosures involved men whose Trotskyist leanings were much more clearly marked than those of the Zinoviev group. The trial began in January, 1937, the principal accused being Piatakov, civil war President of the Ukrainian Soviet and now Assistant Commissar for Heavy Industry; Sokolnikov, Right-winger and personal enemy of Stalin; Muralov, close friend and admirer of Trotsky, and the erratic Polish journalist, Karl Radek.

Again the whole proceedings were conducted in public court, loud-speakers and microphones spreading the confessions and accusations over the whole of Russia. The principal charges were concerned with industrial sabotage directed by Piatakov, who used his position in the Commissariat for Heavy Industry to instal wreckers and saboteurs in the most important steel factories.

Startling details were given concerning a trip from Moscow in a stolen Government plane, as a result of which the Opposition leader met Trotsky in Copenhagen and received his instructions from him. According to Piatakov's confession, Trotsky convinced him that the traditional Marxist opposition to individual terrorism did not apply to the Soviet Government, because Stalin's rule was too secure for any hope of internal revolution. Therefore, the only course open to them was the assassination of Stalin and certain other leaders as quickly as possible.

As the cross-examination grew more searching, the usual confessions mounted up, backed by pæans of false humility and insincere admiration for Stalin. Veiled suggestions were made indicating more suspects, and involving a third group of anti-Soviet plotters. Of the Seventeen, all received sentence of death except Radek, who was spared in his promise to disclose details of a widespread conspiracy among high officers of the Red Army, accusations which resulted in the Army purge described later in this chapter.

With deep disgust, Stalin gave his personal view of the tragic demoralization which had degraded the Opposition from a more or less honest political programme to the gutter tactics of Fascism and primitive murder. "From the political tendency which it showed six or seven years earlier, Trotskyism has become a mad and unprincipled gang of saboteurs, of agents of diversion, of assassins acting on the orders of foreign States."

It speaks highly of Stalin's sense of justice that he did not hesitate to double-check the charges made against the accused, lest place-seeking politicians should seek advancement by falsely informing against an inconvenient superior. In one of these periodical checks, the special agents of Stalin unearthed evidence which showed that Yagoda, who had been so ruthless in ferreting out the misdeeds of the "Sixteen" and the "Seventeen," was secretly in league with the extreme Right Wing of the Party and was scheming with the remnants of the Buharin-Rykov group. Within twenty-four hours the former self-styled "Sword-bearer of the Revolution"

found himself in prison, his place at the head of the G.P.U. going to the fiery Nikolai Yezhov.

Freed from the trickery of Yagoda, the G.P.U. concentrated its whole attention on forging a powerful chain of evidence which should finally rid the Soviet State of the doubters and the would-be dictators.

By March, 1938, full details were assembled and twenty-one accused were brought to trial. Without a doubt Yezhov had done his work well, for among the twenty-one were anti-Soviet elements of all varieties. Best-known names were Buharin and Rykov, whose policy of Kulak enrichment had been ruthlessly scrapped by Stalin; Krestinsky, former Trotskyist and ambassador in Berlin; Rakovsky, former ambassador in London; Yagoda, lately chief of the G.P.U.; Grinko, Chernov, Ivanov, ex-members of the Planning Commission who had indulged in sabotage; and, most interesting of all, the Kremlin physician, Dr. Levin, and his assistant Kazakov.

The old Opposition leaders were charged with the usual industrial and economic sabotage, carried out principally with the help of Grinko, Chernov and their associates, who were not content with positions of trust on the State Planning Commission, but must attempt to use their privileged status to divert national wealth to their personal use.

Further links in the Trotsky chain were exposed by Krestinsky, who from the Soviet embassy in Berlin was in permanent contact with the arch-enemy of Stalin. Through Krestinsky, went the secret instructions on terrorism and the demands for more energetic action. From the same source were distributed funds obtained from the embezzlements of Soviet property conducted by Russian trade delegates whose views coincided with those of Trotsky and his henchmen.

Most appalling of all the many charges were those levelled against Yagoda, who is fitted to take his place with Caligula and Himmler among the most fiendish characters of history. Among the thousands of Soviet officials who are justly respected for their sober ways of living, Yagoda appears like an eastern satrap. Morally unbalanced, depraved and avaricious, the "sword-bearer's" orgies disgusted even his accusers. To provide the necessary funds for activities of this kind, Yagoda had embezzled funds allocated to the G.P.U. and had accepted large bribes from the remnants of Trotskyism to shut his eyes to their schemes.

Under the influence of Rakovsky and the Oppositionists closest to Trotsky, Yagoda had used his influence to remove those friends of Stalin whose loyalty was proof against bribes and promises. He had succeeded in obtaining a hold over Dr. Levin, the resident physician in the Kremlin, by threatening to imprison the doctor's wife and son if he refused to co-operate. From the laboratory of Dr. Kazakov, poisons and noxious drugs were prepared for Levin, who introduced them into the food of the victims. Happily for Stalin, he had some time ago instituted a system whereby all his food should be tasted before being served and he was therefore unassailable from this angle.

Others were less fortunate. Menzhinsky, Yagoda's predecessor as head of the G.P.U., was removed by poison; Kuibyshev, Stalin's friend for thirty years, also died in similar circumstances; even the aged Maxim Gorki had not escaped the insane attentions of the murderers.

Tortuous and underhand methods of this kind sickened Stalin, who, for all his ruthlessness, is just and honest, even to his enemies. Of the twenty-

one accused, eighteen faced a firing-squad. Rakovsky and Pletniev were spared but sentenced to twenty-five years' imprisonment, which was tantamount to death since both were over sixty years old.

From this most unhappy interlude the Soviet Union emerged secure. The revolver shot of Nikolayev, though it loosed a train of horror and blood, at least served to force Stalin to drop his scruples and eradicate the political figures who, if they had been permitted to live, might have succeeded in encompassing his death and thus have weakened the nation in its approaching death struggle with Nazi Germany.

## 2. The Red Army

In recent years the U.S.S.R. has been subjected to the interested gaze of innumerable foreign observers, whose subsequent reflections have illuminated many of the obscure pages of Soviet history. The only body to escape this inquiry has been the Red Army, about which not one comprehensive work has been published in the English language. Yet, without knowledge of the peculiar qualities of the Red Army and its relations with the Stalin Government, adequate appraisal of the Russo-German War becomes impossible.

In addition to the practical campaigning of the Civil War years, Stalin has always been keenly interested in the development of the Army; indeed, his personal influence has been largely responsible for moulding it into its present form.

Earlier in this book, reference has been made to the circumstances in which the first Red Army was born. Without traditions, without trained officers, ill-equipped and undisciplined in 1918, the pressure of epoch-making events had crushed the confused mass into one of the world's most magnificent fighting forces. The very speed at which it was built, however, made certain faults inevitable. Stalin alone of the Russian political leaders took the trouble to analyse those weaknesses and eventually to eradicate them.

In the early months of the Civil War, Trotsky had attempted to solve the deadlock arising from a shortage of trained Red officers by pressing into the service the old specialists of the Czarist Army. There was much to be said in defence of such a drastic step and many of the recalled Imperial officers were high-minded enough to place their love of Russia before hatred of the Bolsheviks.

One such was the former Commander-in-Chief to Nicholas II, General Brussilov, who had lived in hiding in Moscow after the October Revolution. Many times wounded in the World War, Brussilov had lost a leg during his period of concealment as a result of artillery fire from a Red detachment. In spite of these tribulations, when Pilsudski's army crossed into the Ukraine in 1920 the old general presented himself at the headquarters of the War Commissariat, to whom he offered his services and his sword. He served the People's Army loyally and well and was honoured by the whole country when he died in 1925.

Of similar heroic stature was General Nikolayev, who commanded a Red brigade which was surrounded while delaying the advance of Yudenich against Petrograd. Yudenich knew his prisoner well, they had been com-

missioned by the Czar from the same military academy. He sent for Nikolayev and offered him his hand. The captured officer proudly refused to take the hand of a "murderer of the Russian people," and in a fit of rage Yudenich condemned him to death. A request to die by firing squad was refused; Nikolayev mounted the makeshift scaffold and, as the rope tightened round his neck, cried to the assembled soldiers: "Long live the Red Army! I declare that I have served the Russian workmen and peasants to my last breath!"

But the Nikolayevs and the Brussilovs were only a small minority. To offset their devotion must be placed the frequent betrayals and desertions of ex-officers whose class interests were stronger than their patriotism. Such a traitor was Neklyudov, of whom Zinoviev said: "He was put in charge of Krasnaya Gorka. He received every possible aid from us. How then could we expect treachery from such a man? But do you know what he did? He handed over Krasnaya Gorka to the Finnish White Guards."

Cautious as ever, Stalin had refrained from commenting on the recruitment of Czarist specialists until he had had time to test the scheme in operation. Two factors convinced him that the small gains in loyal servants did not compensate for the risks of treachery.

At the height of Stalin's fight to maintain the tottering Bolshevik rule in the southern provinces, the Czarist Colonel Muraviev turned traitor and used his army to smash the resistance of the Soviets in Simbirsk (Lenin's birthplace), causing the breakdown of Stalin's plans for the defence of the area. On top of this blow the heroic defence of Tsarytsin, by the army corps commanded by Voroshilov and Minin, had been rendered more difficult by the sabotage carried on by those officers of the old Army whose pride would not permit them to accept orders from one who proudly announced that, before leading an army, he had worked as a coal miner.

Due to the influence of Trotsky and his associates in the War Commissariat, Stalin's attack upon the military specialists had been ignored. At Trotsky's recommendation the supreme command of the Red Army was given to the twenty-eight-year-old ex-lieutenant of the Guards, Mikhail N. Tuchachevsky.

Behind the shield of Trotsky's political protection, Tuchachevsky endeavoured to build the new Army along the lines laid down by the then chief of the German Reichswehr, General von Seeckt. The complications of the international situation in 1921 enabled this strange *mésalliance* to be instituted. Von Seeckt detested Bolshevism, but his hatred of the Reds was overshadowed by his hatred of the Versailles Treaty. When Trotsky offered the German Army facilities for the training of officers and airmen on Russian territory, in return for technical advice and equipment, Von Seeckt swallowed his anti-Bolshevism and accepted the offer. Thus, not only did the Red Army benefit from German ideas, but it also received an annual payment of 250,000 gold marks in the bargain.

Though Stalin later used their co-operation with von Seeckt in his attack on Tuchachevsky and his friends in 1937, he does not appear to have opposed the proceeding in 1922. Apparently he then took the view that the unquestioned technical ability of Tuchachevsky was sufficiently valuable to permit of small errors of judgment. Besides, the early successes of the young general and his boundless enthusiasm had endeared him in the affection of the rank and file soldier. As the French soldiers of Napoleon proudly

referred to their "little corporal," so the Red Army men repeated the story of Tuchachevsky's escape from a prison camp in order to join the Soviet Army and his stirring remark to a friend: "Within twelve months I shall be either a general or a corpse." Possibly even the Bonapartist parallel did not escape the wary eye of Stalin.

In any event, by the 1930's, Stalin was growing increasingly uneasy as Tuchachevsky's germanification of the Red Army proceeded apace. As if to help him in his decision, his old Tsaritsyn colleague, Voroshilov, was also disquieted by the trend of Army development. Basing his conclusions on data supplied by Voroshilov, Stalin developed his criticisms of the Soviet High Command.

Though the Five Year Plans and the exigencies of the "parasitic war" against Trotskyism precluded any reform of the Army, the basic lines of Stalin's case were clearly defined as early as 1934. Briefly his opinion was that no amount of effort could bring the Red Army to a standard of clockwork efficiency equal to that of the Reichswehr. In twenty years, perhaps, yes; with war clouds already gathering on the political horizon, no. This did not mean, he added, that technical and mechanical development should be discouraged; what was needed was an organization wherein German technique could be fused with the revolutionary enthusiasm of the Red soldiers.

He did not fall into the error of Voroshilov, who at first inclined to the traditional forms of revolutionary war, barricades and guerilla bands, but he did demand the revitalizing of the Army with new revolutionary ardour.

When the Politbureau, as a result of Stalin's pressure, decided to make changes in the Army, it received an unpleasant shock. Tuchachevsky and his immediate associates not only disputed the theoretical premises of the new policy, they sabotaged its application from behind the scenes. The Bolshevik Party suddenly realized that the military machine had arrogated many of the prerogatives of the political leadership.

For the modern reader, fresh from contemplation of the frequent conflicts between the National Socialist political machine and the Reichswehr General Staff, such a state of affairs seems almost commonplace. For Stalin and the Bolsheviks, Tuchachevsky's increasing independence was a threat to the very roots of the Soviet regime.

Without exception, the preoccupation of a successful revolutionary movement with military action has led to the rapid transfer of power from the political machine to the military.

Cromwell climbed to dictatorship on the back of the Rump Parliament, while Napoleon's Imperial throne was founded upon the need to defend revolutionary Paris against the Austrian monarchy. Small wonder that Stalin immediately began his preparations for the cleansing of the Red Army which, of all armies, came closest to the classical definition of Clausewitz: "The most powerful army is that which regards itself simply as the executive arm of the established Government."

The tactics which had been so successful against Trotsky, were applied on a smaller scale to the "Military Opposition." Tuchachevsky, however, was not blind to the reasons for Trotsky's defeat and he endeavoured to prepare defences against Stalin's projected attack. Marshals Voroshilov, Budienny and Blucher were known to be supporters of the Stalin view and the dissident Army leaders guarded against the possibility of betrayal by

rigorously excluding the loyalists from their deliberations. Principal ally of Tuchachevsky in his schemes against the Party was Jan Gamarnik, friend of the Right-wingers Buharin, Rykov, and Piatakov, who had succeeded Bubnov as Political Chief of the Army and Assistant Commissar for War.

In the midst of their schemes a bolt from the blue warned the plotters of impending danger and set Stalin on his guard.

The politician closest to Gamarnik, was that same Georgi Piatakov who had flown secretly to Copenhagen to see Trotsky. For this he was brought to trial among the "Seventeen" in January, 1937. Though admitting his visit to Trotsky and his misuse of his position as Vice-Commissar for Heavy Industry, Piatakov was careful to avoid making any mention of his treasonous association with the disaffected generals. In spite of the secrecy of the affair a rumour had reached the egregious Radek, who saved his life at the trial by passing his information to Stalin and Yezhov at the G.P.U.

Alarmed by these disclosures, Tuchachevsky, Gamarnik and the others decided that action must be taken before Stalin had time to prepare a counter-attack. Throughout March and April the generals gathered carefully selected units from their commands who could be trusted to obey their officers against the Government. In the last week of April a secret meeting, held in the open outside Moscow, fixed the date for the insurrection as May 15th.

Swift though the plotters had been, they were not quick enough for Stalin. On May 11th, 1937, Tuchachevsky was demoted from his position as Commander-in-Chief and Assistant War Minister and sent to an obscure command in the Volga district. On June 10th he was recalled to Moscow and tried *in camera*. On June 12th he was found guilty of treason and shot with nine others, including Generals Yakir, Uborevitch, Eidemann and Primakov. Gamarnik cheated the firing squad by committing suicide just before his arrest.

Before the Soviet people had adjusted themselves to the shock of seeing so many of its responsible military leaders shot, the G.P.U. published the result of its investigations into the plan for armed insurrection, which Tuchachevsky's demotion had so narrowly forestalled.

The Moscow Rifle Division, under its commander, Petrovsky, was to occupy the Kremlin enclosure and deal with any resistance which might be offered by its G.P.U. guards. Tuchachevsky, Gamarnik and the generals were then to force their way into the Kremlin building and deal with Stalin, Molotov and their immediate subordinates. To keep order in the city following the overturn, General Dubovoi was ordered to move his Ukrainian division into Moscow.

Stalin's uncanny patience and his ability to seize upon the most propitious moment to strike had saved the Soviet State from a new and perhaps even more bloody civil war.

In place of Tuchachevsky, Stalin raised Voroshilov to the position of Commander-in-Chief, while Budienny was charged with the eradication of the remnants of the Tuchachevsky-Gamarnik faction. As a first step in this process, the system of Political Commissars, which the late Commander-in-Chief had abolished, was revived. To each unit was attached a "political specialist" whose job was to educate the soldiers politically and also to keep an eye on the military commanders.

Though the purge had deprived the Red Army of many capable soldiers, Stalin had retained the services of the best known. They were eventually to justify his faith by their devotion to the U.S.S.R. in its war against Hitlerite Germany.

Prominent among them are, Voroshilov, son of a miner in the Donetz coalfield; Budienny, hero of the famous "Song of Budienny's Horsemen" and most popular of all the Marshals; Yegorov, colleague of Stalin in the Polish campaign of 1920; and Shaposhnikov, one of the few progressive officers whose strict military training before the Revolution (he was a Colonel in the Czar's Army) did not prevent him from loyally serving the Soviet. To this core of tried and reliable soldiers, the post-revolutionary military academies have added many younger figures whose worth was proved for the first time in action against the Nazis. Best known of these is the forty-six-year-old Semyon Timoshenko, who is the *protégé* and close personal friend of "Klim" Voroshilov.

Once he had succeeded in eliminating the Tuchachevsky camarilla, Stalin used the short spell of peace which remained to him, in preparing the Red Army to meet an attack from the West. In accordance with the principles drawn up in the early stages of the military debate, no effort was spared to bring the common soldier once more to that pitch of patriotic enthusiasm and self-sacrificing loyalty, against which the armies of fourteen nations had vainly battered during the Civil War.

The new Political Commissars undermined the foundations of the rigid officer caste with which Tuchachevsky had surrounded himself and strove to replace mechanical obedience by intelligent initiative. The proportion of non-commissioned officers to all other ranks was increased, with a view to providing trained leaders for small groups of four to ten men, who are now proving to be the most common formation operating in mechanized warfare.

The old revolutionary oath of the Civil War days was revived and in its stirring tones, so different from the mechanical "attestation" of other armies, the unconquerable spirit of the Russian soldier proclaims its determination to defend the integrity of the U.S.S.R. to the last breath.

"In entering hereby into the community of the Red Army of workers and peasants, and taking upon myself deliberately and of my own free will the duty of giving aid in the hard and holy wars of the oppressed peoples, I swear to my brothers in arms, to the whole nation of workers and to my own revolutionary conscience that I am ready to fight worthily and without fear, treachery or misgiving, for the great cause for which the sons of the noblest families of workers and peasants have already given their lives, for the victory of the Soviet power and the triumph of Socialism."

And then, on reporting for training, the recruit was called upon to repeat after his commanding officer:

1. I, son of working-class parents and a citizen of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, assume the title of a soldier in the army of workers and peasants.

2. Before the workers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the whole world I pledge myself to bear this title in honour, to learn



the art of war conscientiously and to cherish as the apple of my eye the property of the people and protect it against all robbery and destruction.

3. I pledge myself to observe revolutionary discipline strictly and resolutely and to obey without demur all orders given me by the commanders set over me by the Government of workers and peasants.

4. I pledge myself to refrain from all actions derogatory to the dignity of a citizen of the Soviet Union and to restrain my comrades from such actions, and to direct my every action and thought towards the freeing of all workers.

5. I pledge myself to respond to the first call from the Government of workers and peasants by placing myself at its disposal for the defence of the republic of workers and peasants against any attack and peril from any enemy, and to spare neither my energies nor my life in battle for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and for the fraternization of all races.

6. May the scorn of all be my lot and may the hard hand of revolutionary law punish me if ever with evil intent I break this my solemn oath.

### 3. *Appeasement*

While Stalin occupied himself with the destruction of the Oppositions, both political and military, the voice of Adolf Hitler echoed from every corner of Europe.

By 1935 Germany had cast off the restriction of Versailles and was openly re-arming before the anxious eyes of the rest of Europe. The very diversity of Hitler's claims and threats had at first left an element of doubt as to what direction the march for *Lebensraum* would take. Prior to 1935, France and England had felt themselves most threatened by the Third Reich, by virtue of their position as the principal pillars of the 1919 Peace Treaty. Now it was clear that a new note was being injected into the German trumpetings.

The old traditional hatred of the "dirty Reds," which had existed since the days of Dimitrov's heroism and the Reichstag fire, was being overborne by a more sinister refrain. Passing from purely wordy threats, it seemed the Nazis were preparing to move eastwards against the Soviet Union. From a murmur in 1935, the anti-Bolshevist manoeuvrings rose to a frenzied scream during the Spanish War.

The opinion of Stalin and the majority of the Politbureau was that Germany, for all her bluster, could not be ready for war for a period of two or three years at least, but the possibility that the internal epilepsy of German economy would precipitate a war as an alternative to revolution had to be faced.

The spirit of honest co-operation in a mutual undertaking to restrain the insane ambitions of National Socialism had prompted Stalin to join the League of Nations and had enabled him temporarily to discard the World Revolution in favour of a common Anti-Fascist Alliance.

The depressing spectacle of the impotence of the League served at first to strengthen the Russian desire for Collective Security. Litvinov conducted the stirring campaign for firmer resistance to unprovoked aggression, built round his famous dictum, "Peace is indivisible." Among the nominal supporters of Collective Security, only Stalin was prepared to implement

his promises. The interest of Britain and France in the ideal of peace was obviously governed, not by principles, but by the extent to which the Nazis threatened Anglo-French interests.

It is not suggested that Stalin's interest in peace was any more altruistic than that of the British or the French Governments, but he alone understood the basic aims of German Imperialism and the pent-up forces which were driving the Third Reich along the road of piratical plunder; he alone was prepared to back his judgment by the force necessary to break the potential aggressors before it was too late.

Abyssinia, Spain, Austria, represented the writing on the wall for European peace. How was it that only Stalin seemed anxious to defend it?

Later events show beyond doubt that Messrs. Chamberlain, Daladier and company were no less convinced than Stalin that Germany would eventually be compelled to go to war. Their tragedy was that they were gulled by the anti-Bolshevist ravings of Hitler into believing that the outburst, when it did come, would be directed towards the Ukraine and South-Western Russia. No admirers of the Soviet system, they were not unduly concerned with the necessity of defending Russia against Germany.

History will pass stern judgment on the insane myopia of the democratic statesmen, who saw one bastion of security after another go down before the Nazi aggressor. They were to learn by bitter experience, that to attempt to satisfy an appetite like that of neo-German imperialism merely serves to imbue the aggressor with the idea that he can continue his pillage with impunity.

On March 15th, 1938, the panzer divisions entered Prague.

The Czechoslovak State, created out of the maelstrom of 1918 Europe, represented the keystone round which the territorial plans of Versailles were built. Czechoslovakia was plainly the last barrier against the Nazi flood. The Anglo-French Appeasers watched that barrier crash without lifting a finger to preserve it. "After all," murmured the purblind politicians, "Czechoslovakia is only an insignificant little State in Central Europe and we are great and as yet unattacked."

With the same promptitude with which he had called upon the League to apply sanctions against Mussolini, Stalin appealed to France to undertake joint action to restore the Czech State to independence. The French Government hesitated and was lost. Permission was magnanimously given to the U.S.S.R. to fight Hitler alone if she so desired, but Stalin was no longer in any doubt as to the real value of the high-flown phrases about "Collective Security."

Following the lead of her French ally, Britain also acquiesced in the rape of Czechoslovakia and her responsible political leader openly prepared for the unnecessary abasement of his country before the Germans at Munich in September.

Stalin foresaw the later developments and carefully avoided becoming involved in a war in Central Europe without allies. At home he was just completing the final liquidation of the military opposition and had no wish to plunge the Red Army into hostilities against the Reichswehr, until the new ideas and adjustments had been fully adapted and brought to maximum efficiency. In the political field, at the moment Prague was being occupied, he was completing the annihilation of the last of the old Opposition groupings by means of the Buharin-Rykov Trial of March, 1938.

In such case only one avenue remained open. The sham of "Collective Security" was buried with as little fuss as possible and the tempo of internal reorganization and preparation for war was quickened against the day when the tiger of the Third Reich should have digested its Czech victim and strike at other prey.

## CHAPTER IX

## RETREAT

ON AUGUST 23RD, 1939, THE NEWSPAPERS OF THE WORLD PRESENTED TO horrified readers a picture showing Josef Stalin standing between his Prime Minister, Molotov, and the ex-wine pedlar, Nazi Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop. Huge headlines proclaimed the signing of a Pact of Non-Aggression between the Third Reich and the Soviet Union. Stalin, usually inscrutable, smiled broadly from the photograph, looking even more pleased than the grinning Ribbentrop.

Next day and for many days afterwards the new alignment of the Great Powers dominated all discussion of political affairs. Further details were given about the fateful rendezvous, which seemed to make the sudden change-over even more sinister than it first appeared.

When the 'plane carrying the German delegation arrived on the Moscow airfield, said the reporters, the regimental band of a crack Russian regiment greeted them with the strains of the Horst Wessel hymn, that song of the prostitute's bully which a poetic justice has turned into the anthem of Nazism. Gaily bedecked hangars, draped with the Swastika flag entwined with the Hammer and Sickle, completed the strange picture of the marriage of Red and Brown.

Within twenty-four hours of signing the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, Stalin crashed from his position as No. 1 defender of European peace and became the "Bolshevik traitor" and "Red Dictator," much as he had been described by the Right-wing Press two years before, when Franco was murdering the Spanish working classes. Smug Red-baiters emerged from their studies and changed their carpet slippers for tilting armour, to ride against the resurrected dragon of Bolshevism; Colonel Blimps and sections of the more reactionary clergy made up the chorus of execration. Impartial newspapers like the *Manchester Guardian*, who attempted to keep an open mind until the true reasons behind the Pact became clarified, were howled down or ignored altogether.

With our knowledge of later developments, it can only be regretted that such a unanimous outcry against Russia should have arisen, particularly in the French Press, without any semblance of unbiased appraisal. When Stalin later received equally profuse offers of material aid "in the great common cause against Fascist aggression," his satisfaction must have been tempered somewhat by the reflection that the approval of the democracies can sometimes turn 180 degrees in a night.

The generally accepted view seemed to be that Stalin, far from being interested in the ideal of peace, was deliberately stimulating the fires of war in Europe, with the intention of holding his country in check until the exhaustion brought about by years of war would leave the Western nations

helpless before the Communist hordes, who would presumably take advantage of the situation to spread revolution by force.

If proof were needed of the foolishness of such a conception, it could have been found in the repeated teachings of Lenin, Stalin, and every influential Bolshevik leader since 1917. The fact that only Trotsky seemed to regard such an idea with satisfaction, should in itself have absolved Stalin from any connection with it.

Some justification for the democratic reaction can be found in the unnecessary insults which Red Russia appeared to have accorded her late partners in the tragi-comedy of Collective Security. At the very moment Stalin was appending his signature to the Pact, a British delegation, led by the Foreign Office expert, Mr. Strang, was in Moscow for the purpose of carrying on the preparatory conversations for an agreement between Britain and the Soviet.

It is difficult to understand why a politician as astute as Stalin should have seen fit to give such a gratuitous insult to a Great Power. Possibly he was aware of the anger which would follow his treatment of the British plenipotentiaries; he permitted it because the presence of a British delegation in Moscow increased his own bargaining power against Ribbentrop and enabled him to play off one Government against the other in an attempt to extract the most favourable terms available. This factor, combined with Hitler's need to conciliate Russia before his attack upon Poland eleven days later, enabled Stalin to win unexpected concessions.

The strongest argument against Stalin's *rapprochement* with Hitler lay in the fact that it seemed to give the lie to the former policy of the Soviet at the very moment when that policy seemed to have achieved success. On March 31st, 1939, the British and French Governments gave an unequivocal promise to Poland that if she should be attacked by Germany they would immediately come to her assistance. This guarantee contained no ambiguities and no escape clauses; it stated simply: "If Germany moves, we fight."

Why did Stalin sign an agreement with Germany in face of so clear a statement of policy from Britain and France? Unquestionably because he did not believe in the sincerity of the guarantee to Poland or that it would result in a declaration of war against Germany. Even when the democracies did go to war on September 3rd, Stalin held on to his fear that their action was half-hearted and designed to pave the way for some underhand agreement with Hitler, directed against the Soviet Union.

Two powerful factors influenced the Red leader to take this line. It is admittedly difficult to determine to what extent a man's personal character can influence the fate of nations, but there can be no doubt that Stalin's suspicions were aroused against the Allies. Whatever they said, he felt that they were lying and, with his usual caution, he endeavoured to remain aloof and avoid committing himself until events should clarify the situation. Before condemning him for this lack of faith in Messrs. Chamberlain and Daladier, the critics might at least have considered the series of examples from which he had to judge the potentialities of the democracies.

In 1931, Japan delivered the first armed blow at the system of Versailles by occupying Manchuria. Stalin openly assisted the Chinese in every way possible, short of a declaration of war. He did this in spite of the fact that the whole of his country's energies were directed towards the fulfilment of

the first Five Year Plan and that widespread famine and sabotage were decimating the land. From Britain and France came polite condemnation of the ungentlemanly violence of Japan but nothing more.

On September 18th 1934, in order to identify herself absolutely with the idea of European stability and peace, the U.S.S.R. entered the League of Nations. Alone of all the members, she gave practical proof of a readiness to contribute more to the cause of peace than words and sympathy.

When Mussolini sent his legions into Abyssinia, Moscow loyally fulfilled her obligations and welcomed the application of sanctions. Abyssinia was not Russia's concern, she had no interest in arresting Italian designs in the Mediterranean and no African colonies to protect. She acted because she had no desire to see aggression elevated into a successful principle.

When Germany re-militarized the Rhineland, Stalin received another object-lesson in democratic ineptitude. France made gestures of resistance and mouthed dark threats, but Britain, who had no particular desire to see France in a position of undisputed European hegemony, demurred and let slip the opportunity to nip the canker of Hitlerism in the bud.

1936, 1937, and 1938 saw Europe drain the bitter cup of Appeasement. Every act of aggression against the minor Powers, every assault upon treaty rights, every enslavement, went unchallenged by the League. Except for the voice of Mr. Winston Churchill, Mr. Anthony Eden, and a few unregenerate activists, the uninspiring procession continued. Manchukuo, Ethiopia, Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia were presented, bound hand and foot to the rapacity of Fascism.

Little wonder Stalin had no faith in Allied promises of "war to stop aggression." The men who, from whatever motive, made the unnecessary surrender at Munich, still held the reins of foreign policy in August, 1939. How was Stalin to know that the Polish pact would not go the way of the innumerable clauses of Versailles' and the wearisome declaration of the League of Nations?

To add to Stalin's difficulties, the Army purge of 1937 had considerably weakened the Red Army and until the full programme of adjustments had been completed, its value as a fighting force to be opposed to the German Army was doubtful.

Fortunately for the Russians, powerful considerations influenced Hitler to look with favour upon the possibility of an agreement with Bolshevism. The guarantee to Poland made it clear that no further concessions could be squeezed from the Western Powers by the old blackmailing methods which had worked wonders in 1938. If, however, Germany could win the neutrality of Stalin, the fear of driving Russia into war against them might influence the Allies to evade their responsibilities to Poland. Ribbentrop, convinced that Britain and France were effete and incapable of fighting, succeeded in persuading his chief that such would be the case.

In any event, even if the worst happened and the democracies really did go to the help of Poland, such a course would make it still more necessary to ensure the neutrality of Russia, as a guard against the dreaded fear of a two-front war, which had haunted the minds of Germany's generals since 1918.

In this context, fraught with the gravest dangers, Stalin took the only course open to him; he grasped the Nazi scorpion as firmly as he could.

If we judge the Nazi-Soviet Pact from the point of view of the military



ADORATION

Stalin, photographed between Ena Geldijeva, member of a Collective Farm in Turkmenistan, and Mamlakat Nachangova, a Tadjik schoolgirl from the same region

interests of Britain and France, then it was a betrayal, and a definite source of strength to Germany. From the purely selfish standpoint of the Soviet Union it was the most masterly political retreat of the twentieth century.

In August, 1939, Russia's position in relation to Germany was hopelessly weak. Unprepared both militarily and politically, she knew that war could only result in disastrous defeats and the loss of the greater part of European Russia, including almost the whole of her armaments industry. Germany, it was clear, would be forced to obtain access to the grain lands of the Ukraine and the rich oilfields of the Caucasus if she was to have any hope of sustaining a long war against the greater material resources of the Allies. Whatever Russia said, the exigencies of the war would compel the Nazis to reach out for these areas. To attempt to avert the inevitable by rushing into war could have but one result. The Ukraine and the Caucasus would be under the German heel within a matter of weeks.

With this state of affairs in mind, it is impossible not to admire the astuteness by which Stalin agreed to sell, on his own terms, the necessities, the seizure of which he had not the means to prevent. He cheerfully accepted the only payment the Germans were able to make because it suited his purpose best to do so. With credits obtained in marks for the corn and oil, Russia bought up as much as possible of the goods which Germany had and the Soviet lacked.

Agricultural machinery, small and precision tools, lenses and scientific instruments, passed in a steady stream to increase the productivity of the huge factories which the U.S.S.R. was feverishly constructing behind the barrier of the Urals, where invading armies could not reach except after a sustained campaign.

German consumption of oil grew apace, while the increasing need for Russian materials gave Stalin confidence to increase his price progressively. Technical experts from Germany were inveigled into organizing improvements to the Soviet railway system, ostensibly to facilitate transport to the Reich of the vital oil and corn. Motor plant and ordnance factories benefited from the services of the best brains of the Ruhr, firmly believing that their labours were directed towards supplying their own country with Russian war material. In the political sphere, Stalin resumed his old game of patient watching.

Eleven days after the Ribbentrop meeting, German troops crossed the Polish border. Britain and France declared war on the aggressor and moved against the threatened advance on Paris.

On September 17th, Russian armies entered Poland from the east and advanced rapidly across the almost undefended territory to effect a junction with the German forces.

Much violent discussion has centred around the Soviet attack upon a country with which she had a solemn pact of non-aggression. The more devoted defenders of the Comintern vociferously denied the existence of any prior agreement with Germany to divide Poland between them. While such a proceeding is understandable in an effort to restrain anti-Soviet feelings in the democratic countries, it had no basis in fact. *The Pact of August 23rd unquestionably contained full provision for the partition of Poland.* Ribbentrop himself said as much in a speech at Danzig on October 24th, 1939: "When the German Army advanced victoriously into Poland, the Allied propaganda declared that the Russian Army would certainly not



participate in the measures against Poland. Instead the Russian troops—after a very few days—moved forward on the entire front in Poland and occupied Polish territory up to the line of demarcation previously agreed upon with the Russians."

If the existence of a secret clause depended on the evidence of Ribbentrop alone, it might easily be refuted, but the practical conduct of the campaign proves the point beyond doubt. German troops retired before the Red Army at certain points, showing every inclination to co-operate in a friendly spirit. Press photographs showed high officers of both armies, jointly reviewing troops and taking the salute from the same base. It is inconceivable that either side would have taken such action unless full instructions had been received from responsible quarters.

Stalin had won his first victory at a cost of precisely nothing. The extent of the acquisitions, won by German arms and presented to Bolshevism, was made clear in a radio statement from M. Molotov, who said: "The territory in Poland that has passed to us has an area of 196,000 square kilometres and a population of about 13 millions, of whom more than 7 millions are Ukrainians, more than 3 millions White Russians, more than 1 million Poles, and more than 1 million Jews."

Without hesitation Stalin put into operation his plan for the Sovietization of Poland. As General Sikorski, leader of the Polish Government in Britain, has freely admitted, economic conditions in Poland left much to be desired. Marshal Pilsudski, for all his genius, made no serious attempt to alleviate the hard lot of the Polish peasant, who suffered in a manner reminiscent of his Russian counterpart in 1914, from the twin evils of poverty and absent landlords. Stalin seized upon this significant fact and used it to further his aim of turning the Russian half of Poland into a buttress against Germany.

His plan was neither to hold Poland permanently (he has already undertaken to relinquish control to the Government of General Sikorski), nor to erect powerful military defences in the territory. In place of such wasteful effort he set out to enlist for the Soviet Union, the support of the most progressive section of the Polish people—the peasantry.

With the old ruthlessness with which he had condoned the destruction of the Kulaki in Russia, he turned to the Polish lower classes and deliberately incited them against their semi-Fascist landlords. Marshal Timoshenko, in a speech quoted by the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent in Moscow, called upon the Polish people to "fall upon Polish gentry with fire-arms, pitchforks and axes, and follow the example of the Russian people under Lenin and Stalin." "The Polish landlord who collected a portion of all produce in lieu of rent will be dispossessed, the land will belong to the Polish people," said a responsible Soviet spokesman.

Experienced agitators were followed by Russian agricultural specialists, who assisted in the division of the land among the poor peasants, thus giving them a definite interest in the continuance of Soviet rule as a guarantee of possession. The eventual success of this manoeuvre can be seen in the periodic upheavals which bind large numbers of German troops in Poland and prevent their employment in other theatres of war.

Hard on the heels of the Polish invasion came a series of other bloodless conquests. On October 28th, Esthonia yielded to diplomatic pressure and, under the Russo-Esthonian treaty, granted the Soviet the right to lease

naval bases and aerodromes on the islands of Dagoe and Osel at the mouth of the Gulf of Riga, in the port of Baltiski near Tallinn and at two towns in the interior. Soviet garrisons comprising some 30,000 men were to be permitted to remain at these important centres.

The Soviet-Latvian Mutual Assistance Pact followed on October 5th, granting facilities for the building of naval bases at Libau and Windau, together with a number of aerodromes and points of vantage at which Russian troops could be stationed.

Lithuania followed suit on October 12th, surrendering after a few days of intense diplomatic opposition. Red garrisons were permitted to organize the defence of certain vital junctions and the important city of Vilna.

So far Stalin had gone from victory to victory. He had gained more territory than Germany, without firing a shot. Already heads were wagging in the Wilhelmstrasse and Ribbentrop's reputation, which had reached its apotheosis following his Kremlin trip, was beginning to tarnish a little.

As the final step to complete his plan, Stalin presented a set of demands to Finland, similar to those granted by the other Baltic States. By the end of November it was clear that Finland was not prepared to yield as her neighbours had done. Stalin had no time for negotiation and believed that the threat of force would be sufficient to overawe the Finnish Government and cause them to give in. On December 2nd, 1940, in order to give the semblance of legality to the Russian decision to seize the territory needed to defend Leningrad, Stalin set up the People's Government of Finland at Terijoki, a small town just inside the Finnish border.

The question arises whether Stalin hoped by this means to impose revolution by force upon the Finnish people in complete contradiction of his earlier declaration that "to seek to spread revolution by force of arms is ridiculous." The suggestion pays little respect to his political acumen.

In Poland the peasantry offered material for Soviet ideas; Finland was a democratic State run along progressive lines, it had no oppressed minorities and was reasonably well governed. When Stalin placed Otto Kuusinen in charge of the People's Government at Terijoki, he was well aware of the true facts of the situation. He merely wished to use Kuusinen, a Finnish Communist well respected among the Finnish working class, as the mouthpiece of his requests.

Though carefully planned, the scheme was wrecked by the powerful personality of General Mannerheim, who made no secret of his determination not to yield. In spite of his advanced age, the general had devoted the whole of his energies to planning the defence of his country against just such an attack. The Mannerheim line, like its Maginot predecessor, convinced the defenders that they could effectively resist any attack until assistance should come from the democracies, who were confidently expected to take up the cudgels against Russia.

The People's Government, using a radio transmitter inside Soviet territory, concentrated its attack upon "Butcher Mannerheim," who was personally detested by Kuusinen because he had been mainly instrumental in smashing the Finnish revolution in the years following 1919.

Appeals to working-class sentiment were of no value because the Soviet was not in a position to offer the people any great improvement in their mode of life and could only hint at the great benefits which might be expected in the future from Russian rule. The anarchist, Prince Kropotkin,

had effectively analysed this property of revolution before Stalin was born, in these words: "A revolution must from its inception be an act of justice towards the ill-treated and oppressed, and not a promise to perform this act of reparation later on. If not, it is sure to fail." It certainly made no appreciable impression on the Finnish situation.

When Stalin actually gained his point after a hard-fought campaign, the policy he followed forces the observer to think that he never had any real intention of instituting a Finnish Soviet State. He certainly dropped the Kuusinen Government the moment his demands were granted, though the military situation would have permitted him to overrun the entire country without further resistance.

In spite of the difficulties encountered, the Russian terms were surprisingly light. The Soviet assumed control of the Karelian Isthmus, possession of which assisted in the defence of Leningrad, together with certain vital coastal areas on the Arctic seaboard and several small islands in the Gulf of Finland. The whole area comprised only 3,970 square kilometres, but it contained the whole of the Mannerheim Line and many of Finland's most important defensive centres. As compensation for this annexation, the Soviet ceded over 70,000 square kilometres of territory situated in a less vital spot.

Stalin's policy in Finland finally convinced Germany's leaders that Russia was employing the Non-Aggression Pact for no other purpose than to consolidate her own defences against attack. In view of the fact that, in the whole of Europe, only Germany remained strong enough to contemplate such action, Stalin's manoeuvres could only have as their object, defence against Germany. For a politician as vain as Ribbentrop, the spectacle of the despised "Bolshevik Workman" making hay in the rays of the German sun could not have been pleasant. Under his influence the Nazi political machine grew openly more antagonistic to the Russian treaty and began to engineer a complete reversal of policy before Stalin's successes made even that too late.

In Britain, recognition of the true reasons for Stalin's Pact with Hitler gained ground. The violent antipathy of September, 1939, had disappeared and given place to a watchful caution. This changed attitude was largely due to the clear vision of the Churchill group of younger politicians who, in spite of their chief's old antipathy to Bolshevism, were aware of the underlying motives in Soviet policy. Though not condoning the Russian war against Finland, Mr. Churchill applied a brake to the hotheads, who demanded full scale action against the invaders.

It is probable that the historians of the present war will be able to show that the delay in sending a British expeditionary force to Finland was brought about by the restraining influence of those who were not blinded by the Non-Aggression Pact into forgetting that German-Russian enmity was far too deep-seated to disappear because of a paper agreement.

One remarkable feature of the Finnish war occupied the attention of the German military observers more than any other. The attack upon Russia in the summer of 1941 is largely due to their misreading of the signs.

Stalin had expected that the Finns would submit to pressure, he was definitely not expecting to have to fight a war. As a result the Red Army was caught unprepared. In addition, the Russians had to fight over difficult terrain and under the most severe climatic conditions. The fighting occurred

on two main fronts. In the south the Red attack was concentrated against the Mannerheim Line and the Karelian Isthmus. In the northern sector it was necessary to wage a mechanized campaign over a considerable territory and in difficult conditions.

The fighting began in the depth of winter when the temperature seldom rises above zero. Lakes, rivers and swamps abounded in the valleys, while advances along the higher ground were hampered by ranges of hills which are heavily wooded. In country of this kind the Finnish guerillas possessed every advantage over their opponents.

Those factors which in the summer must have ensured rapid victory for the Russians, were rendered useless by the bad weather. In December, the days offer two or three hours at the most of good light, while frequent blizzards render flying extremely hazardous. Even using the nearest home bases, the Soviet Air Force was unable to give much co-operation to the ground forces, which were thus deprived of the value of their tremendous material superiority.

These difficulties were partly responsible for the slowness of the Russian advance and the total absence of any quality of "blitz" in the campaign. But they were not the only difficulty, nor even the most important. The Germans were quick to recognize the delay and ill-success, they made the error of putting it all down to purely military weakness.

In reality the apparent inefficiency of the Red Army in Finland was principally due to definite factors arising from its peculiar nature and individual qualities. The creation of a revolutionary army in the midst of civil war had left indelible marks on the traditions of the Red Army. In his book, *Lessons of the Civil War*, S. Gussev describes the type of situation then prevailing, giving rise to ideas and beliefs which have not entirely disappeared twenty years after.

"Time no longer permitted us to raise formations anywhere in the hinterland," says Gussev, "all volunteers and conscripts were immediately allotted to the troops at the front, especially at the beginning of the Civil War. Battalions grew into regiments, weak regiments were amalgamated, divisions were formed of single regiments. At the front we did not merely fight battles, we had to undertake terrific organizational work as well. Behind the front special reserve armies came into existence and were assigned the task of giving military and political training to the man power drawn from the hinterland. Perhaps the most characteristic feature of the Red Army (which indeed distinguishes it from all former armies) was the fact that *two-thirds of its regular troops were raised directly by the front command.*"

Men recruited in conditions such as these, necessarily retained their individual qualities to a much greater degree than those who were conscripted after the German fashion and trained to carry out mechanical evolutions, while stifling not only all comment, but also all progressive thought. The Political Commissars of the Red Army concentrated on the political education of the soldiers, imbuing them with a deep-seated hatred of military aggression, which they regarded as part and parcel of the profit-making schemes of capitalism.

The conviction that the Soviet Army would never be called upon except in defence of its homeland had become a corner-stone in the existence of the average soldier. When the Bolshevik Government first decided to

introduce compulsory training in 1918, it prefaced its proclamation by stating categorically: "The liberation of mankind from the burden of militarism and the barbarity of war between nations is one of the basic tasks of Socialism. The aims of Socialism are universal disarmament, perpetual peace and the fraternal co-operation of all races inhabiting the earth."

From 1930, the Russian people and soldiers had seen their leaders struggling manfully to achieve such high ideals. Participation in the League of Nations and defence of the weaker nations of Europe had taken root in the minds of everyone. The Political Commissars, in their daily talks and in the periodic debates held on subjects of policy, served only to drive deeper the defensive character of the Russian armed forces.

When, in December, 1939, these same troops were ordered to move against Finland, they were completely dis-oriented. Except for the few whose political knowledge was equal to the task of analysing the essentially defensive quality of the attack upon Finland, the war had neither rhyme nor reason. Not knowing what they were fighting for or why, the Russian troops fought mechanically but without the enthusiasm which swept them irresistibly to victory in the 1920's. They found no support among the Finnish people and felt themselves guilty of the very crimes they had so strongly condemned when the Fascist Powers had carved up the dismembered remains of Spain, Abyssinia and Manchuria.

Against such a depth of bewilderment, the expedients which the Communists used to explain the war made little impression. Of what use was it to explain that the People's Government of Terijoki had requested the aid of the Red Army against Mannerheim, when every village showed a sullen hatred of the advancing "liberators"; how could the soldiers believe the stories that the attack was made to forestall a Finnish advance against Russia?

When Hitler explained his rape of Austria and Czechoslovakia by saying that they were just about to attack Germany, the Red Army men had greeted the excuse with the derision it deserved. When their own leaders seemed to be following the same path, their doubts and questionings can easily be understood.

These highly important facts escaped the eyes of the Nazi leaders completely. With the sole exception of General von Brauchitsch, the National Socialists gleefully watched the slow progress of the Soviet troops and promised themselves an easy victory against such amateurs when the occasion should arise.

Not until the summer campaign of 1941 did they learn the full extent of their mistake.

## CHAPTER X

### WAR

BEFORE THE NAZI PARTY LEADERS SUCCEEDED IN SMASHING THE RESISTANCE of the more sober-minded elements who looked askance at the roscate pictures of rapid victory which Goebbels was painting to the German people, a long and bitter internal struggle took place.

The late Commander-in-Chief of the German Army, von Brauchitsch, had carefully studied the disintegration of the Kaiser's Armies in 1918 and, in

his re-creation of the Reichswehr under the Nazis, had worked with the principal aim of avoiding conflict with Russia at all costs.

Von Brauchitsch is an old artillery officer who received an orthodox military training, but he has, nevertheless, made a close study of the effect of political ideas in war. His desire to avoid conflict with Russia was not caused by fear of the military consequences, but because he realized that Marxist ideas and anti-war sentiment had obtained a powerful hold on the minds of the German working class. If such men should have to be used in mass armies, their reliability would be a matter of grave doubt.

To avoid such an eventuality, the Reichswehr had originally been planned as a numerically small but powerfully armed and mechanized force, capable of conquering by virtue of its technical superiority rather than by sheer weight of numbers. Such troops had been victorious in Poland and in Norway, and had successfully smashed through the French Ninth Army and turned the flank of the Maginôt positions by a swift stroke at the junction of the French and Belgian forces.

If the conflict could be confined to such tactics, von Brauchitsch and his immediate associates promised Hitler victory without a long war. If, however, the struggle should so spread as to involve the U.S.S.R., whose resources of man-power were greater than any other European nation, then the picked troops of the Reichswehr would be inadequate. To fight on a front extending over thousands of miles it would be necessary to call upon those age groups to whom the lessons of post-war Europe represented a nightmare to be avoided at all costs.

Von Brauchitsch managed to make himself heard in Nazi Party circles largely through Goering, whose *Luftwaffe* was already fully occupied against Britain and in no condition to engage in adventures in Russia. Hitler himself appears to have passed several months in one of his coy moods, wavering between the two stools.

The defeat of France and the illusion of German invincibility caused him to listen more sympathetically to the aggressive advice of von Ribbentrop and the purely political leaders. The deciding influence came from General von Keitel, Chief of the German General Staff, who expressed confidence in the ability of his Panzer divisions to achieve swift success in the Ukrainian lands, where geographical features were particularly favourable to the employment of mechanized troops.

The objections of the more cautious German leaders were lightly dismissed, as Goebbels and his henchmen described the weakness and irresolution shown by the Red Army in Finland, concluding that if difficulty had been experienced in dealing with a State the size of Finland, the Soviet would be helpless before the tremendous offensive power of Germany.

Also leading the Germans into war, was their belief in the internal weakness of Russia and the alleged widespread disaffection against Stalin. Much of this fantastic idea may have resulted from the conversations which Stalin has always insisted took place between Trotsky and the Opposition leaders and the Nazi Party heads. Among the principal accusations levelled against Trotsky had been the treacherous liaison with Hitler, to whom the minority groups were said to have promised the Ukraine and certain districts in Western Russia in return for military help against Stalin.

At the trial of Piatakov and the Seventeen it was disclosed that Trotsky's eldest son, Leon Sedov, had lived in Berlin for the sole purpose of main-

maintaining communications between his father and the Russian Oppositionists, through the agency of the Trotskyist Krestinsky, who was Soviet ambassador in Berlin.

The tremendous Nazi military successes of 1940 had been largely won by the skilful manipulation of the internal affairs of the nations of Europe, it was natural that the sober warnings of von Brauchitsch should be lost in the vociferous arguments of the rabid anti-Bolsheviks, whom the turn against Russia had brought back into prominence. Most influential of these was the woolly-headed apostle of the anti-Bolshevik crusade, Alfred Rosenberg.

Next to *Mein Kampf*, Rosenberg's book, *Mythus Der Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* (Myths of the Twentieth Century), exerted a powerful influence among the younger Nazis. The dominating features of this unbalanced mixture of sound philosophical ideas and half-baked racial theories were fanatical hatred of the Jews and violent attacks against Bolshevism. The desire to prove how easily Germany could smash the Red menace, caused Rosenberg to glance at the internal composition of those subject peoples who had maintained such a record of revolt during the era of the Romanovs.

It seemed to him that the chances of winning victory through the help of a disaffected nationalist minority were particularly favourable in the Ukraine. As early as 1927, in his *Tendencies of German Foreign Policy*, Rosenberg had stated categorically as one of the essential planks of his Party's policy: "The attention of Germany should be drawn towards the strong separatist movement in the Ukraine and the Caucasus."

He justified this dogmatism by recalling the 1917 days, when General Max Hoffman had raised up an independent Ukrainian Rada to oppose the Bolsheviks. He might, however, have pursued his investigation further and studied the later developments. After the defeat of the Rada by the Southern Red Army Group, commanded by Stalin and his colleagues, a second attempt was made by the Germans to detach the Ukraine from Russia. General von Eichhorn used his army to set up General Skoropadski as Hetman of the Ukraine. The new ruler found himself in control of the area covered by the German artillery and nothing more. Harried by the nationalist guerilla bands of Petliura and subjected to increasing pressure from the Soviets, the Skoropadski episode ended as ignominiously as General Hoffmann's earlier venture.

If Rosenberg had taken the trouble to acquaint himself with the opinions of those best fitted to judge, he would have been forced to agree with General Krauss, who commanded the Austrian Army which struggled for two years in the Ukraine against the Bolsheviks. "No trace of genuine Ukrainian national sentiment was perceptible, either in the towns or in the country districts," said Krauss in his book, *Reasons for our defeat*, published in 1920.

It was obvious to those in the know, that Hitler was moving in the direction of war against Stalin and the doubters joined the hopeful chorus, rather than risk their necks by opposing the will of the Führer. Long before the outbreak of war, Nazi agents made contact with the *émigré* White Russians in Paris and sounded the Romanov Grand Dukes as to their readiness to accept the Imperial Crown if it should be presented on a German bayonet.

They received an unpleasant shock. In spite of their antipathy to Bolshevism, which had swept them into exile and poverty, the Whites scornfully rejected the proposal that they should act as the puppet of German power politics. In so doing, they showed that years of evil had purified the old nobility of its blind arrogance and brought back a love of Russia which was stronger even than the desire for personal advancement.

The news of these manoeuvres reached Stalin shortly after their failure. While still officially friendly to the Nazis, he could scarcely give them open publicity, but, since the Russian Government could not be held responsible for the doings of the Communist International, the affiliated National Parties made no secret of their knowledge of the changed German attitude.

Throughout the early months of 1941, Stalin slowly reduced the quantities of material being exported to Germany, employing every means in his power to avoid adding to the military strength of his adversaries. As a further defence against the threatened attack, he put out feelers in Britain and the U.S.A. to test the probable reaction of those Powers should Germany attack Russia.

Now that the Government of Winston Churchill had replaced that of the Appeasers, Stalin felt more confident that British promises of co-operation would be implemented if the occasion should arise. Under British influence, the Soviet let it be known that it was prepared to negotiate with the Polish *émigré* Government, to reach a settlement of the territorial questions which had poisoned Russo-Polish relations through five centuries.

M. Troyanovsky, Soviet Ambassador in Washington, conducted a similar investigation to discover whether the U.S.A. would be prepared to collaborate with Russia should a German attack in the West be followed by Japanese entry into Eastern Siberia. Here again Stalin received reassurances which did much to relieve the anxiety caused by the prospect of having to fight the Nazis without allies.

Knowledge of Stalin's deliberate preparations against a German offensive finally decided Hitler to act without further delay. German mechanized divisions advanced from occupied Poland, while a German-Finnish force directed its attack towards Leningrad.

A breathless world watched the first few days of battle in agonized silence. Remembering the sorry episode of Finland, even the most sanguine military observers set a time limit of three months on the Soviet resistance. They forgot that the Red soldier attacking Finland and the same man defending his Socialist Fatherland were two quite different propositions.

Stalin and the Soviet General Staff were aware that the first shock of the Nazi attack would certainly result in considerable territorial loss. They refused to stake everything upon preventing the Germans from penetrating an entrenched line. With the tragedy of the Maginôt strategy to guide them, Voroshilov and his colleagues attempted an entirely new tactical manoeuvre against the German attack in depth.

The German theory of "parallel advance" lays down the principle that, if an enemy defensive position is pierced at several isolated points by the use of shock troops, the attackers can safely continue their advance and ignore the areas between the breaches where the defending troops still remain intact. This conception was successful against France and Belgium, because French strategy taught that in such conditions the unbroken troops



must voluntarily retire and attempt to consolidate a new line of defence in the area to which the defeated units had retreated. Should they not retreat, they risked encirclement and annihilation.

The Russian High Command had no such ironbound notions of what must be done according to the book. If the Nazi panzer divisions smashed their way through the Russian forward positions, it was left to the rearward commands to meet their advance, while the front concentrated on holding its position and tried to close the gap made by the attackers. In place of linear defensive works, a series of strong points were dotted about the battle area and backwards to a depth of many hundreds of miles.

Where weight of metal and numerical superiority compelled a retreat, the principles which Stalin had evolved, in the days when Deniken overran the Caucasus, were revived and adapted to the new situation. Relying for the technical direction of the war upon military experts, Stalin brought to bear on the question a mind familiar with military necessities but free from the hidebound rigidity which too often seems to characterize a purely military leadership.

He was careful to insist that this did not imply the rejection of tested methods simply because they were not peculiar to Soviet troops and frowned alike on the stick-in-the-muds and the arm-chair strategists. He revived the old common-sense approach which had caused a former Red Army chief to say to those who tried to turn warfare into a closely guarded mystery beyond the understanding of ordinary men:

"We must devote our whole attention to improving our material and making it more efficient, rather than to fantastic schemes of reorganization. Every army unit must receive its rations regularly, food-stuffs must not be allowed to rot, and meals must be cooked properly. We must teach our soldiers personal cleanliness and see that they exterminate vermin. They must learn their drill properly, be taught to make their political speeches short and sensible, to clean their rifles and grease their boots. . . . They must learn and teach the art of adaptation to local conditions, they must learn to wind their puttees properly so as to prevent sores on their legs, and once again they must learn to grease their boots. That is our programme for next year in general and next spring in particular, and if anyone wants to take advantage of any solemn occasion to describe this practical programme as 'military doctrine,' he's welcome to do so."

It is scarcely accurate to describe the Russian strategy as a repetition of that used so effectively against Napoleon Bonaparte in 1812. Napoleon was permitted to advance deliberately and brought to action only at points where a defending army could use territorial advantages to inflict severe losses on the French Army. No such deliberate retreat is undertaken by the Soviet forces, who contest every foot of ground, retiring only in face of overwhelming odds.

In his revival of the "scorched earth" policy, Stalin took one of the major decisions of his career and incidentally gave final proof to Britain and the U.S.A. that he had no intention of making any agreement with the invaders while ever Russian armies remained in the field.

Casual observers are apt to underestimate the implications of this drastic decision. To instruct a peasant and urban population to destroy their entire

possessions, demands absolute knowledge that the people are in full agreement with their Government and are willingly prepared to suffer for their country's cause. Armies of trained soldiers can often be employed in severe measures which they neither understand nor approve; when Stalin called upon the civil population of Russia to defend their homes by fire from spoliation, he expressed his faith in the stability of his Government.

To Stalin's personal influence can be traced certain distinctive features of the Soviet tactics which had never before been seen in modern warfare and which were derived directly from his experience of political as well as military matters.

To further these schemes he relied upon the fact that the German Army must contain a large percentage of pre-Hitlerite Socialists, men to whom the ideas of Marx and Lenin had represented a way out from the post-war abyss. Like General von Brauchitsch, who is haunted by the same spectre, Stalin remembered that in the German elections of 1933 which made Hitler Chancellor, almost eleven million votes had been cast for the Communist candidates. Even the butcheries of the Gestapo and the concentration camps could not have eliminated such support altogether.

To these ready-made allies, Stalin directed the whole force of the able propaganda machinery of the Soviets. Aircraft flew low over the German positions in the front sectors, dropping printed passes which could be used by any disaffected soldier to enable him to pass through the Russian defences to safety.

Equally drastic measures were aimed at the weak spot in the German Army, the rigid caste system which separates the men from the officer corps. To the private soldier, burning with hatred of the jackbooted Prussians, the Soviet Government hurled the challenge: "Shoot your officers and come over to us." In similar vein is the treatment accorded by guerilla troops to captured Germans. Officers are frequently shot out of hand as class enemies, while the common soldier is treated as a comrade who has been misled by his own rulers.

Apart from the moral issues involved in such tactics, their efficiency in undermining the morale of the Nazi officers is tremendous. Facing a ruthless enemy and with troops of doubtful loyalty behind him, the task of a German front-line commander is no sinecure.

Even the most trifling retreat is apt to develop into a headlong stampede, as General von Kleist's panzer corps learned to their cost when Timoshenko counter-attacked before Rostov on Don in December 1941.

Helped by Stalin's direction of the political aspects of the war, the Russian General Staff developed its technical arms and concentrated on bringing its mechanized divisions up to a standard of efficiency equal to their opponents.

Tuchachevsky had devoted much time to an attempt to devise a "flying tank," an armoured vehicle which could be automatically converted into an aeroplane. The purpose of these experiments was to be able to land forces behind an enemy's position which could spread destruction among his communication lines and retire as soon as it was challenged by superior forces. The "flying tank" was not a success, but the investigations gave rise to new ideas involving the training of "aerial infantry" or parachutists.

Though the Nazis have used such detachments as shock troops with

some success, the manoeuvre can only have any lasting military effect if the parachute companies land among a friendly civil population. If they do not do so, they can carry out only a limited amount of sabotage and destruction before they are annihilated by greatly superior ground forces.

In 1921, when Tuchachevsky was still loyal to the Soviet Government, he described how effective would be the revolutionary appeal of the Red Army to the pressed troops of Germany.

"The Socialist Revolution has revolutionized strategy," he said, "the Red Army will never fight an adversary unaided, for it will always find the support it expects from the working class of the country with whose Government it is at war. This support will not be confined to revolutionary outbreaks in the rear of the enemy's armies, since one of its essential points is the fact that reinforcements can be recruited from the workers inhabiting the territory occupied by the Red Army. Such reinforcements will not merely be drawn from the local population; they will also come from the man-power of capitalist armies. *This accession of a stream of international fighting forces is a characteristic feature of the Red Army methods of warfare.*"

These ideas received their first practical test under the guidance of Stalin. Their result is not yet fully apparent, but the next decade will certainly show how deeply the ideas of Soviet Russia have burrowed beneath the clay feet of the Hitler colossus. Whereas in the early months of the war, the French and British Governments had talked airily about the "inevitability of revolution in Germany," as though the process were purely automatic, Stalin has concentrated his whole personality upon the analysis of conditions inside Germany.

Propaganda, which at one time seemed to be the prerogative of Dr. Goebbels and Signor Gayda, is employed by the Soviet with an imaginative efficiency which has excited the frank admiration of Mr. Churchill, himself no mean authority on the subject. Powerful transmitters bring to bear on the German civil population every conceivable pressure. Gruesome but accurate data is made public as to casualties among the invading troops, destroying the faked figures and falsehoods with which the crippled Doctor had formerly succeeded in gulling his hearers.

Special corps of psychologists concentrate their efforts on undermining the resolution of the German housewife, who begins to regard every delayed letter as a sign of the death or capture of her husband. Advice is given by experts to the nations of Europe, writhing under the Nazi tyranny, on how best to carry out organized sabotage so as to run least risk of arrest.

Tactics like this, if unspectacular and unsavoury, have a powerful cumulative effect upon the stability of the Third Reich and cause consternation in the minds of the highly placed Quislings, who live in daily dread of the revolver and the knife.

The spirit of Josef Stalin and the iron will of the Russian people stand firmly before the advance of Fascist terrorism and look with confidence to the day when the flaws and seams in the German State will burst into gaping rifts. That spirit rings out in the words which Stalin addressed to the Russian people on November 7th, the anniversary of the Revolution of 1917:

"Our reserves of man-power are inexhaustible. With the spirit of Lenin with us, is it possible to doubt that we can and must gain victory

over the German invaders? The enemy is not as strong as certain terror-stricken and weak intellectuals picture him. We can deny that. Our Red Army has more than once turned the much lauded German troops into panic-stricken flight. If one judges Germany's actual position, it is not difficult to see that they are facing disaster. Hunger and impoverishment now reign in Germany. The whole country bleeds. The spirit of revolt is gaining ground not only in the occupied countries, but in Germany itself where the people see no end to the war. Another few months, another half-year, a year maybe, and Hitlerite Germany must burst under the weight of her own crimes."

Making no claim to personal credit for the tremendous resistance offered by the Russian people to the invaders, Stalin concluded with a single sentence which summarizes his every desire and expresses the central motive of his whole life: "Under the banner of Lenin, onward to victory!"

## CHAPTER XI

### STALIN

IT HAS BECOME THE FASHION AMONG PRESENT-DAY BIOGRAPHERS TO ANALYSE the childhood and early youth of their subjects in a search for psychological factors and experiences which are often exaggerated to become the motive force in the career of the mature man. The eminent historical biographer, Emil Ludwig, applied his great talents to this type of work with some success but in the hands of less erudite imitators it tends to degenerate into triviality and over-simplification.

In the twentieth century, three men have carried in their own hands the destiny of millions of their countrymen: Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin. Comparisons are obvious and inevitable. All three were reared in poverty, none of them received the benefits and mellowing influences of security and comfort.

Hitler's whole being revolted from the slobbering spinelessness of Alois Schickelgrüber, who could not live a month without a bed-mate, but must replace one dead wife by another without even the outward show of respect and grief.

Mussolini learned from bitter experience what poverty and hunger meant. His childhood burnt itself out prematurely in a vicious determination to climb out of the pigsty, no matter who suffered in the process.

Stalin, too, experienced hunger and want; he, too, realized that his father could never leave the shallow rut down which his family had dribbled for generations. Had he not been fortunate enough to find friends who led him through the maze of confused ideas to the sanity and balance of Marx and Lenin, he also might have exterminated thousands to satisfy a down-trodden ego.

Even more striking in this connection is the fact that each of the modern Dictators owed his first upward step to the influences of his mother. Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin turned from their fathers and found encouragement and sympathy in their mothers. To Catherine Djugashvili, Stalin owes his education, his patience, and his ability to face danger without flinching.

But there the resemblance ends abruptly. Stalin's power rests on foundations utterly different from that of his two most bitter opponents. He has none of the paranoiac intensity of Hitler, no hysterical demagoguery, nor is he capable of the passionate outbursts of murderous anger and womanish weeping which characterize the all-powerful Führer.

The theatrical bombast of Mussolini is equally foreign to the Red ruler. The almost ludicrous insistence on physical strength and masculinity which compel the Duce to force his photographers to lie on their stomachs so as to give him the illusion of height, the wearisome posings in shorts and slippers, the bruise on the chin, and the suspiciously hairy chest—all are missing from the mental and physical make-up of Stalin. Indeed, poking fun at his contemporary fellow Dictators is one of his most frequent sources of humour.

He lives plainly, but not unnecessarily so. He does not ape the saints as Hitler does, parading a neurotic asceticism as though it had some mystic quality denied to ordinary mortals. He smokes continuously, drinks wine in moderation, frankly preferring the sweet wines of Georgia to the expensive foreign beverages which are popularly supposed to be more pleasant.

His family life is no different from that of the average intelligent working man. He shows no sign of the unhealthy fear of feminine contact which renders the paunchy Hitler so ridiculous, and he scorns the thigh-slapping, super-manliness of Mussolini, whose supposedly spartan life is tarnished by a series of disreputable scandals, if the common gossip of Rome can be trusted.

Stalin lives in a small, three-roomed apartment adjoining the Kremlin building. Plainly furnished and conventional, it in no way differs from the millions of respectable middle-class homes throughout the world. Before the Revolution it served as living quarters for one of the more insignificant of the Czar's lackeys.

The Kremlin itself has always been a source of wonder and amazement to the visitor to Moscow. With its dull-red walls embrasured like a medieval fortress, it stands aloof as the Vatican City detaches itself from Rome. Even when Peter the Great moved his Court to the new city of St. Petersburg, the Kremlin remained for the Russian people the heart and nerve-centre of their country.

Lenin understood this deep-seated love of Moscow and moved the capital back shortly after the October Revolution. Stalin goes even further, he is identified with the Kremlin itself. Moscow workers hurrying to their factories and offices often catch a glimpse of the General Secretary, seated in the back of an official car, emerging from the heavily guarded entrance of the Kremlin on his way to the offices of the Secretariat, about ten minutes' walk away in Old Square.

He invariably travels at high speeds, preferring the swift American Packard cars to the products of Soviet factories. His own car is said to be bullet-proof in the traditional manner of oriental despots, but the armour-plate has never yet been tested against an assassin's missile. He is invariably preceded and followed by one G.P.U. car, and another carrying his secretaries.

In his early days he married Catherine Svanidze, daughter of an obscure Caucasian Bolshevik. She does not seem to have made any impression on

his life and Soviet Russia scarcely knew she existed until news of her death was announced.

By her Stalin had one son, who, according to stories current in Moscow, disappointed his father by devoting his energies at College to social and amorous escapades rather than to study. Where Mussolini gave his sons aeroplanes and bombs to play with over Abyssinia, Stalin packed Jascha off from the temptations of Moscow and put him to work in an engineering plant.

Some years after Catherine's death, Stalin married Nadezhda, seventeen-year-old daughter of one of his boyhood friends, the metal worker Sergo Alliluev. A beautiful and gentle creature, Nadezhda lived unobtrusively in the little Kremlin apartment. In the first years of their married life she worked, like so many millions of other young wives, in a Moscow factory. To her husband's delight she showed a keen interest in his plans for Soviet cultural development and could be seen regularly attending evening classes and study circles in the capital.

Nadezhda Alliluev bore Stalin two children, Vassili, now twenty-four years old, and Svatlana, now eighteen. Each child attended the ordinary Moscow high school and pursued the usual advanced educational courses, in common with others of the same age. Stalin and his wife understood the dangers inherent in a badly developed childhood; they subjected their children to the balancing influence of others drawn from every walk of life.

On November 9th, 1932, Nadezhda Alliluev died suddenly from peritonitis due to her own persistent refusal to rest following an attack of appendicitis. Stalin is not given to emotional outbursts, he despises them as signs of weakness, but the death of his wife affected him more than he was prepared to admit.

The layout of his home remains as she planned it, while her family frequently visit the grave in the Novo Devitchi cemetery, where a striking white marble tomb is erected in her memory.

Of greater importance in the life of Stalin than his home, is the six-storey building in Old Square which comprises the headquarters of the General Secretariat of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He works there daily and seldom leaves before three or four in the morning.

He occupies a single office, rather like the conference room of the average provincial bank. The only furnishings are shelves of books and two large photographs showing the lion head of Marx and the shrewd gaze of Lenin. The entire effect is conventional in the extreme and differs completely from the affected simplicity of Mussolini and Hitler, who ensconce themselves in a huge room for no better purpose than to overawe their subordinates and impress the gullible visitor.

He has only two secretaries and stubbornly refuses to delegate his routine tasks to subordinates. Everything connected with the position of General Secretary passes through his hands and most of his instructions are carefully written out in longhand before being typed by his assistants.

In the early days of 1918, the Bolshevik workman, Mechonoshin, was deputed to prepare a report on the possibility of using the existing Government machinery and Civil Service for the benefit of the Soviet. He began by visiting the War Office, where he was received by the authorities with all the panoply and paraphernalia of the military caste.

Mechonoshin acknowledged defeat and reported his findings to Lenin in

these words: "This machine cannot be remodelled. It is more likely to change us than be changed by us. It is the system that we shall have to abolish. We must carefully preserve and lay aside all that is valuable in it so that we can use it when building up the new machine and our new organization."

The result of this bursting of the shackles was deeply impressed upon Stalin in the old days when the Bolshevik headquarters at the Smolny Institute was the centre of government. Some commissars engaged twice the staff they needed, others had no staff at all. Milling crowds surged round the telephones, in an atmosphere permanently blue with cigarette smoke and steamy from the dripping samovars of tea.

By contrast, the present office of the Secretariat is a model institution. A courteous and efficient staff maintains a twenty-four-hour service under the all-seeing eye of their chief. Foreign observers seeking an interview with Stalin have to go to endless trouble and spend weeks of waiting, but he is always accessible to his own staff. He is not given to extravagant praise, but any sign of constructive ability and initiative on the part of a subordinate, results in quick promotion. Advancement depends on merit only and not upon lengthy service; inefficiency results in immediate dismissal and not, as in certain other countries, in transfer to another and less conspicuous Government department.

Though Stalin is personally the most powerful individual in the modern world, he has never lost his native simplicity. There is no affectation in this, he lives as he does for no other reason than that he prefers to do so.

Among the galaxy of scintillating figures who gathered round Lenin in 1917, Stalin seemed colourless and morose. He had neither the waspish wit of Radek, nor the wordy brilliance of Trotsky; the hail-fellow-well-met attitude of Buharin was equally foreign to his nature. Superficial observers even ignored him altogether, until their closer acquaintance with the inner life of Bolshevism impressed his real worth upon them.

His greatest opponent, Trotsky, fell into this error of underestimating Stalin at their first meeting in Vienna. Recently escaped from the penal settlement at Narym, Stalin was travelling to Cracow to see Lenin. On his way he called on the Party group in Vienna where Trotsky was also living. He knew Trotsky well enough already; it was Trotsky's misfortune that he decidedly did not know Stalin.

Years later, from his Mexican villa at Coyoacán, the former War Lord described the incident. "Suddenly," he said, "the door opened without a preceding knock and in came a person unknown to me—of average height and rather thin, with a sallow face on which could be seen pock marks. The figure uttered a guttural sound which could, had one wished, be taken for a greeting, filled a tea glass from the samovar and disappeared without a word." Surprised, Trotsky asked who the stranger was. A friend replied: "That was the Caucasian, Djughashvili, my fellow countryman. He recently entered the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks and is evidently beginning to play an important rôle."

In spite of this, within ten years of the October Revolution, the "Hall Sweeper" had broken the ambitions of his less reliable rivals and consolidated his indisputable claim to the seat of Lenin.

Many embittered attacks have been made against Stalin for his treatment of the Opposition leaders and the blood-letting which followed the

treason trials. He has been accused of seeking personal aggrandizement by eliminating his colleagues in the Bolshevik Central Committee and of treachery towards those who gave him their support in his campaign against Trotsky.

Impartial study of the years 1936 to 1938, however, disproves this thesis. Stalin was never the friend of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the others. He worked with them for his own purposes and because they shared his views on the danger of Trotskyism. He did so with full knowledge that they were planning to turn against him when he had served their purpose. He regarded them as they regarded him and dealt with them as they would have dealt with him in different circumstances.

While ever the Opposition confined its activity to attacks upon the views of the majority, Stalin permitted them to do so. They brought destruction upon themselves when they passed from attacks on Stalin to subversive manoeuvrings against the foundations of Soviet rule.

To those who have served Russia faithfully, Stalin has always been a loyal friend and generous colleague. He does not remove a man at the first sign of heterodoxy, like Hitler did Röhm, nor does he kill by stealth as Mussolini destroyed Balbo.

Kalinin still stands beside Stalin though he supported the pro-Kulak theories of Buharin in 1936. Voroshilov was in error on the question of Army discipline in 1937, but he lives in freedom and devotes his life to the defence of Russia. Ordjonikidze opposed Stalin on several occasions and did not hesitate to say so, but he occupied high office in the Government until Yagoda's poisoners murdered him.

Stalin judges his friends by the same rigid standard against which he measures everything else. Irrespective of their opinions on any particular question, they are unassailable if they work for the general good of the State. Woe betide them if they do not; a former friendship with Stalin will not save them from trial and the firing squad.

Of modern political leaders, Stalin concerns himself least of all with his eventual place in the future history of Russia. When Emil Ludwig asked him politely: "Do you think you can be compared to Peter the Great?" he laughed outright. "All historical comparisons are hazardous, but that one is ridiculous."

Stalin himself desires no greater praise than that he should be known to future generations as the disciple of Lenin, but already he was passed far beyond that limited conception. In his person and through his work the Soviet Union has risen to a place among the nations of the world far higher than Imperial Russia stood in its heyday.

More than the Emperors, the Dukes and the Führers, this son of an obscure village cobbler has guided the course of history. His past achievements will guarantee him eternal memory, his future deeds can only consolidate his claim.



## CHAPTER XII

## POINTERS FOR THE FUTURE

BIOGRAPHIES WRITTEN IN THE STRESS OF GREAT EVENTS RUN THE RISK OF being rendered incomplete by sudden developments occurring after their publication. Stalin's Russia and Nazi Germany are engaged in a struggle which, whatever its immediate military consequences, will influence the development of the Soviet Union for at least ten years.

By superior armed force and a numerical preponderance in armoured fighting vehicles, the Reichswehr will undoubtedly wrest temporary control of large areas of European Russia and the Ukraine from the Communist Government.

If Germany were enabled to consolidate herself in these areas, she might be able to win over the support of some sections of the population. To do this, however, she would need to concentrate her entire industrial and technical capacity upon improvement of the living standards of the Ukrainian and Byelo-Russian peoples. Trotsky relied upon this possibility when he looked for assistance towards the German Government. He discussed the problem in his book, *The Revolution Betrayed*. "Who shall prevail? This question confronts the Soviet Union on a world scale," declared Trotsky. "Military intervention is a danger but *the intervention of cheap manufactured goods in the baggage trains of a capitalist army would be an incomparably greater one.*"

To guard against this fear is a task which devolves upon the allies of Russia as much as upon the Soviet Government. If German industry is permitted to bribe the less class-conscious sections of the occupied areas by a flood of cheap goods, great dangers must follow to the Stalin regime. Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Anthony Eden have guaranteed co-operation in this sphere; Russian Trade Union leaders visit Britain to smooth out any difficulties.

The advance of the Nazi armies will also deprive the Soviet of a large percentage of her war potential. Vital industrial areas will be lost at a time when their products are most urgently required. Here again Stalin looks to Britain and the U.S.A. for help. Every article which can be sent to Russia, civilian necessities as well as weapons and tanks, assists in maintaining the resistance offered by the Soviet masses to the crushing weight of Hitlerism.

In the military sphere, the mutations of the Russian personnel are a sound indication of future possibilities. When the situation gives promise of becoming reasonably stabilized, when, for example, Stalin judges that the Germans cannot achieve victory for a long period, those Soviet generals best fitted to wage a more static type of warfare will come to the fore.

Germany has only generals whose forte is mechanized and mobile war; for other campaigns she will be forced to place her trust in untried leaders. That is why she strains every nerve to bursting point to crush the forces opposed to her in a minimum of time. The Russian specialists who will conduct her strategy in the event of a return to a modified linear strategy will be Generals Shaposhnikov, Zhukov and their immediate associates.

Shaposhnikov received a thorough training in the orthodox military methods of Czarist days. He won distinction in the World War and, though

he had no independent command in the Civil War, he gained widespread admiration for his reorganization of the shattered commissariat. He is eminently suited to conduct a campaign against an enemy rendered less mobile by adverse conditions.

On the other hand, should the Soviet armies ever be compelled to retire to positions further to the East, warfare approximating more closely to the Civil War years will develop. The greater the area occupied by the Germans, the greater becomes the necessity for guerilla tactics against the enemy rear and communications.

In such conditions, Marshals Voroshilov and Budienny would assume correspondingly greater influence in the conduct of the war. Mention has already been made of Budienny's popularity and the part he played in the Civil War. He is essentially a cavalry general, most suited to mechanized tactics against unentrenched opponents.

Voroshilov is perhaps the most representative of the soldiers produced by the Civil War. Born in 1881, the son of a railwayman, he worked underground in a coal mine at the age of seven. At fifteen he left the pits and found work in a sheet metal works; at seventeen he had his first taste of prison for fomenting a strike in his new factory. By 1906 he had risen to some local prominence in political circles and was sent to Stockholm as a delegate to a conference there. In 1907 he was working in Baku and there began his co-operation with Stalin, who devoted much attention to the young miner in whom he recognized latent abilities.

Voroshilov is not the equal of Shaposhnikov and the older trained officers in the direction of regularized warfare, but in guerilla and revolutionary strategy he is supreme. His personal courage and cheerful personality have endeared him not only to the Red soldiers but also to the general population and members of the Civil Defence services.

Should there be any substantial change threatening the break-up of the Russian front defence, Voroshilov and Budienny will again assume supreme control of the Red Army. Between the two schools of military thought stands Marshal Timoshenko, son of a Bessarabian peasant and one of the outstanding personalities of the war. Although the Soviet keeps her "order of battle" an official secret, it is virtually certain that Timoshenko holds supreme command over all fronts. Through him, and with Stalin's direct personal approval, German arms have received their first serious defeat and been chased ignominiously from Rostov and the Crimean cities.

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## INDEX

- A  
 Abortion, 87  
 Agrarian reform, the 1906, 24  
 Alexander III, Czar, 16  
 Alliluyev, Nadezhda, Stalin's second wife, 127; children of, 127; tragic death of, 127  
 Alliluyev, S., 37  
 Antonov-Ovseňko, V., 42, 44, 45  
 Artel, 83  
 B  
 Bakayev, I. P., 100  
 Bakinski Rabochi, 20, 33  
 Bakunin, Mikhail, 65  
 Balbo, Marshal, 129  
 Beaverbrook, Lord, 130  
 Black Hundreds, the, 21  
 Bloody Mary, 72  
 Bloody Sunday, 22  
 Blucher, Marshal, B. K., 105  
 Blum, Léon, 94, 95  
 Bolshevik Party, discipline in, 63; mentioned *passim*  
 Brauchitsch, General von, 118, 119; character of, 119, 120, 123  
 Brest Litovsk, Treaty of, 43, 44  
 Bronstein, Leon Davidovich, *see* Trotsky, Leon D.  
 Brussilov, General, 103, 104  
 Bubnov, A. S., 41, 89  
 Budberg, Baron, 41  
 Budienny, Marshal, 49, 50, 105, 106, 131  
 Buharin, Nikolai, 43, 56, 59, 64; opposes Trotsky, 65; alliance with Stalin, 67; and Right Opposition, 71, 85; on Stalin, 92, 106; career of, 107, 128.  
 C  
 Caballero, Largo, 96  
 Chabelsky, Police Chief, 18  
 Chamberlain, Neville, 108, 109, 111  
 Chen-Pai-Ming, 67  
 Chess Congress, 77  
 Chernov, M., 102  
 Chiang-Kai-Shek, Generalissimo, 69, 70  
 Chinese Revolution, the, 69, 70  
 Chudnietsky, Rector, 11  
 Churchill, Winston S., 54; on Trotsky, 62, 116, 121, 124  
 Clausewitz, Karl von, quoted, 105  
 Collective Security, 94-97; 108, 109  
 Communist International, 67  
 Cromwell, Oliver, 105  
 "Current History," quoted, 80  
 Czechoslovak Legion, the, 45, 47  
 D  
 Daily Telegraph, quoted, 114  
 Daladier, Edouard, 108, 109  
 Dan, T., 53  
 Decembrists, the, 15  
 Denikin, General A., 46-51; 122  
 Dimitrov, G., 108  
 Divorce Bureau, 87, 88  
 Djibladze, S., 12  
 Djugashvili, Catherine, Stalin's mother; 9; on Stalin's expulsion from School, 13; death of, 125  
 Djugashvili, Josef Vissarionovich, *see* Stalin, J. V.  
 Djugashvili, Koba, *see* Stalin, J. V.  
 Djugashvili, Sossio, *see* Stalin, J. V.  
 Djugashvili, Vissarion (Stalin's father), 7; death of, 11; 90  
 Dostoevsky, F., 14, 15  
 Dreitzer, E. A., 100  
 Dro, 20, 33  
 Dubovoi, General, 106  
 Dukhonin, General, 47, 42  
 Dumping, part in Five Year Plan, 76  
 Dybenko, P. E., 40  
 Dzerzhinsky, Felix E., 41  
 E  
 Eastman, Max, 60  
 Eden, Anthony, 130  
 Eichorn, General von, 120  
 Eidemann, General, 106  
 Esthonia, Treaty with, 115  
 Esthonian Putsch, the, 66  
 Expropriations, the, 28, 29  
 F  
 February Revolution, the, 39-41  
 Feng-Yu-Hsiang, General, 69, 70  
 Fifteenth Bolshevik Conference, the, 70  
 Financial Times, quoted, 80  
 Finnish War, the, 116-118  
 First Bolshevik Congress, the, 19  
 Five Year Plans, Chapter VI, *seq.*  
 Fourteenth Bolshevik Congress, the, 68  
 Franco, General Francisco, 95, 96, 110  
 Frunze, M., 67  
 G  
 Gaida, General, 46, 47  
 Gapon, Father, 22  
 Gamarnik, Jan, 106, 107  
 Gayda, Signor, 124  
 General Secretary, the, *see* Stalin, J. V.  
 Georgia, description of, 10; turbulent history of, 10 *seq.*; Guria Soviet of, 23; Bolshevik Council of, 59  
 Georgian Social Democratic Party, 12 *seq.*  
 German-Polish War, the, 113-114  
 German Revolution, 1923, the, 62, 66  
 Goebbels, Dr., 119, 124  
 Goering, Field-Marshal, 119

Gogol, N., 14  
Gorky, Maxim, 102  
G. P. U., the, 78  
Grinko, G., 75, 102  
Guards Officer, the, *see* Tuchachevsky, M. N.  
Guesde, Jules, 35  
Gussev, S., quoted, 117

## H

Haile Selassie, Emperor, 95  
Himmler, H., 102  
Hitler, 9, 95, 108, and Stalin contrasted, 126-127  
Hoffmann, General Max, 44, 45, 120  
Horst Wessel, 110  
Howard, Roy W., 94-95

## I

Iron Czar, the, *see* Nicholas I  
*Iskra*, 17, 18  
Ivan the Terrible, Czar, 71, 72, 90  
Ivanov, V., 102  
Ivanovitch, *see* Stalin, J. V.

## J

Janin, General, 47  
Japan, 21  
Jordanian, N., 12

## K

Kaganovich, L., on Stalin, 51, 67, 71  
Kaledin, General, 44, 45  
Kalinin, M., 129  
Kamenev, Leon B., 60; supports Stalin, 63, 65, 66; character of, 67; and Moscow Soviet, 67; defeated by Stalin, 67-69; 70, 85, 92, 98, 100, 129  
Kamo, (Simon Ter-Petrosian), and Tiflis "Ex", 29; 30; career of 28-30; 65  
Kandelaki, D., quoted on Stalin, 19  
Kaplan, Dora, 58  
Kautsky, K., 97  
Kazakov, Dr., 102  
Keitel, General von, 119  
Kerensky, A. F., 27, 28-42, 62, 97  
Kirov, S. M., assassination of, 98-99  
Kliet, General von, 123  
Kolchak, Admiral, 46-49  
*Kolkhoz*, 83-86  
Kornatovski, 16  
Krassin, Leonid, 27; and expropriations, 28, 32  
Krauss, General, quoted, 120  
Kremlin, the, 126  
Krestinsky, N., 102, 120  
Kropotkin, Prince, quoted, 115; 116  
Krupskaya, N. K. (Madame Lenin), 66  
Kuibyshev, V., 102  
Krylenko, N., 42, 77  
Kulak, the, 67-69; 85  
Kuomintang, the, 69-70  
Kuusinen, Otto, 115

## L

Latvia, 115  
League of Nations, the, 94, 96, 106, 109

Lee, Jennie, quoted, 89  
Lenin, V. I. (Vladimir Ilyitch Ulianov), 16; and *Iskra*, 17; letter to Stalin, 17; at First Congress, 19; and 1905 Revolution, 23, 24; quoted on Unity, 25; on Trotsky, 25; on Democracy, 25; and "expropriations", 28, 29; advice to prisoners, 32; "War and the Second International," 35; "Against the Current," 36; and April Theses, 39 and February Revolution, 38; deposes Dukhonin, 42 Brest Litovsk, 43, 44; on conscription, 49; supports Stalin against Trotsky, 56-58; illness and death, 58-60; on Trotskyism, 64; on Religion, 87; citations from, 93, 94; mentioned *passim*

Lenin's Tomb, 62

Letter of an Old Bolshevik, the, quoted, 99

Levin, Dr., 102  
Liebknecht, Karl, 35  
Litvinov, Maxim, 29, 94, 95, 108  
Louis XVI, 37  
Ludwig, Emil, 125, 129  
Lunacharsky, A., 89  
Lvov, Prince, 38  
Lyons, Eugene, quoted, 91

## M

Machiavelli, Niccolo, 65  
Makharadze, P.; quoted on Stalin, 22; 59  
*Manchester Guardian*, the, 110.  
Mannerheim, General, 115, 116  
Martov, Y. O., 30  
Marx, Karl, mentioned and quoted *passim*  
Matteotti, 65  
*Maximilian Lenin*, 25  
Mdivani, B., 59  
Mechonoshin, quoted, 127-128  
Mensheviks, 24  
Menzhinsky, V. R., 102  
Military Opposition, the, 105-107  
Mirachovsky, S., 100  
Molotov, V., 33, 75, 87, 100, quoted 114  
Montesquieu, 14  
Muralov, N. I., 101  
Muraviev, Colonel, 104  
Mussolini, Benito, 65, 95, 109, 125; and Stalin contrasted, 126  
*Mythus der Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*, 120

## N

Napoleon I, Emperor, 68, 73, 105, 122  
*Narodnaya Volya*, 15, 23 *seq.*  
Nechayev, on "Code of a Revolutionary," 65  
Neklyudov, 104  
*New Course*, the, 63  
New Economic Policy, the (N.E.P.), 56-59; 74, 82  
*New York Times*, the, quoted 80  
Nicholas I, called Iron Czar, 15

Nicholas II, character, 37; imprisonment, 38; 103  
Nikolayev, L., 98; "Diary" of, 98; 103  
Nikolayev, General, 103, 104  
Non-intervention Agreement, the, 96

## O

*Cath of the Red Army Men*, 107, 108  
*October Bolsheviks*, 73  
Okhrana, 23  
*Old Bolsheviks*, 65, 69  
Opposition Bloc, the, formation of, 68; Stalin on, 69; political platform of, 75, 78; association with Nikolayev, 98, 99; fate of, 98-99  
Opposition, the Right, 71  
Opposition the Second, 67-68  
Ordjonijidze, Sergo, 20, 26, 34, 59; quoted 79; 89, 120  
Owen, Robert, 85

## P

Paris Commune, the, 97  
*People's Will*, the, 15; and assassination of Alexander II  
Peter the Great, (Peter I), 72, 73, 76, 129  
Petliura, S., 120  
Petrovsky, Colonel, 106  
Piatakoy, Georgi L., 59; on Stalin, 71; 106, 109  
Pilsudski, Marshal, 21, 103  
Plehanov, G., 17, 35  
Poincaré, M., 76  
Pokrovsky, M. N., 14  
Poland, partition of, 113-114  
Politbureau, the, mentioned *passim*, personnel of (1924), 66; 71, 84, 88, 105, 108  
*Politica*, quoted, 80  
Political Commissars, 106-107, 118  
Popular Front, 93-95  
P.O.U.M. (Partida Obrero Unificado Marxista), 96  
*Pravda*, 33, 64, 71, 75, 78, 97  
Primakov, General, 106  
Provisional Government, the, 38-42  
*Prosvyeshchenye*, 34, 55  
Pugachev, 14, 84  
Pushkin, 14

## R

*Rada*, the, 44-45  
Radek, Karl, 101; 106, 128  
Radovsky, G., 70, 102, 103  
Ramzen Trial, the, 78  
Rasputin, 37  
Razin, Stenka, 14, 84, 91  
Reclus, quoted on Georgia, 10  
Red Army, the, Chapter III, 64 *seq.*  
Red Army, the Chinese, 69  
Red Guards, the 41  
Religion, 87  
Renn, Ludwig, quoted, 96

Rheingold, 100  
Ribbentrop, Joachim von, 110-112; quoted, 113; 115, 116  
Robles, Gil, 95  
Röhm, Captain Ernst, 65, 129  
Rosenberg, A., 120  
Rudzutak, I., 67  
Russo-Japanese War, 21, 22 *seq.*  
Rykov, A., 70, 71, 106

## S

Savinkov, B., 23  
Sassulich, Vera, 17  
Schickelgrüber, Alois, 125  
Schleicher, General von, 65  
Second International, the, 15  
Sedov, Leon, 119, 120  
Seek, General von, 104  
Selim the Cruel, 72  
Serfdom, abolition of, 17  
Shakhty Trial, the, 78  
Shaposhnikov, Marshal, 107; career of, 130-131  
Shumiatsky, quoted on Stalin, 36  
Sikorski, General, 114  
Sirovi, General, 47  
Skoropadski, Hetman, 45, 120  
Smirnov, V., 100  
Smolny Institute, 128  
Social Revolutionary Party, 23, 24  
Sokolnikov, G., 20, 71  
Souvarine, Boris, quoted, 86  
Soviet Constitution of 1936, 56  
*Sovkhoz*, 83, 86  
Spanish Civil War, the, 95-96 *seq.*  
Spiridovich, General A., 30  
Stakhanov, A., 77  
*Stakhanovism*, 77-78  
Stalin, J. V. (Joseph Vissarionovich Djughashvili), birth of, 9; called Soso, 10; childhood in Georgia, 11; enters Orthodox Seminary at Tiflis, 11; early interest in Socialism, 12; expelled from School, 13; heritage from Georgia, 13; enters Revolutionary Movement, 13; apprenticeship, 16; the "Hall Sweeper," 16; letter to Lenin, 17; gaol, 18; first exile, 18; police dossier quoted, 18; supports Lenin, 19; the "Wonderful Georgian," 19; escape, 20; part in 1905 Revolution, 23, 24 *seq.*; meets Lenin, 24; Lenin's agent, 26 *seq.*; and Kamo, 28-31; gaol, 32; life in exile, 32; escape, 32; rearrest, 33; edits *Pravda*, 33, 38, 39; and Executive Bureau, 34; "Marxism and the National Question," 34; last imprisonment, 34; attitude to 1914-1918 war, 35; and February Revolution, 38; quoted on defence of Petrograd, 40; heads Military Revolutionary Centre, 41; Brest-Litovsk, 43, 44; defence of Tsaritsyn, 46; defence of Petrograd,

47; campaign against Denikin, 50; achievements in Civil War, 51; and Labour Armies, 53; overrules Trotsky, 53; Trade Union question, 54; "Our Differences," 54; appointed Commissar for Nationalities, 54 *seq.*; N.E.P., 57; reaction to Lenin's death, 60, 61; and Trotsky contrasted, 62; as General Secretary, 59, 60, 62 *seq.*; outmanœuvres Trotsky, 66; defeats Zinoviev and Kamenev, 67-69; smashes Opposition Bloc, 70; defeats Right Wing, 71; accused of brutality, 72, 73; basis of power of, 72-75; personal part in Five Year Plans, 74-78; on dumping, 76; on equality, 77; on "our troubles," 79; on "our successes," 80, 81; "Liquidate the Kulak," 82, 83; address to Central Committee, 84; and culture and education, 88-90; place in hearts of Russian people, 90-92; interview with Roy Howard, 94, 95; and Spanish War, 95, 96; and Collective Security, 96; and Kirov assassination, 98, 99; on the demoralisation of the Opposition, 101; military plot against, 102-108; military policy of, 105-107; and Appeasement, 108-110; and German Soviet Pact, 110, 111; gains from Pact, 115, 116; and Finnish War, 117; relations with Germany, 120-122; strategical ideas of, 122-124; courage of, 124; address to Red Army, 124-125; personal characteristics of, 125-127; at work, 127-128; historical place of, 129-131

State Labour Corps, 64

Strang, Mr., 111

Sun-Yat-Sen, Dr., 69

Svanidze, Catherine, (Stalin's first wife), 126-127

Sverdlov, J. M., 34, 41

## T

Tammerfors Conference, 24

Ter-Petrossian, Simon, *see* Kamo

Ter-Vaganian, V., 100

*Testament of Lenin*, the, 60, 67

*Tiflis Ex*, the, 29-30, 65

Timoshenko, Marshal Semyon, 107, 114, 122; ability of, 131

Tolstoy, 14

Tomsky, M., 64, 71; suicide of, 100

Trade Unions, the, 64

Treason Trials, the, 92 *seq.*

Trial of the Professors, 78

Trial of the Seventeen, 101-102, 106, 119, 200

Trial of the Sixteen, 100

Trial of the Twenty-one, 102, 103

*Troika*, the, 66, 68

Trotsky, L. D., (Leon Davidovich Bronstein), 13, 14; at First Congress, 19; opposes Lenin, 19; Chairman of Petrograd Soviet, 23, 24; oratory of,

23; attacks "expropriations," 30; on Stalin, 31; in 1914-1918 War, 35; and October Revolution, 38 *seq.*; on Kerensky, 43; at Brest Litovsk, 43, 44; Commissar for War, 45 *seq.*; and Labour Armies, 53; reaction to Lenin's death, 61-62; and failure of German Revolution, 62; publishes "The New Course," 63; polemic against Zinoviev, 64; defeated by Stalin, 66; joins Opposition Bloc, 68; expelled from Central Committee, 70; sent to Alma-Ata, 70; exiled, 70; assassination of, 70; part in Kirov assassination, 98; denies charges against him, 100; involved in Trial of the Seventeen, 101-102; association with Tuchachevsky, 104; quoted on Stalin, 128; mentioned *passim*

Troyanovsky, M., 121

Tuchachevsky, Marshal M. N., career of, 104-106; demoted, 106, technical ideas of, 123-124; quoted, 124

## U

*Udarniki*, 77

Ulianov, Alexander, 16

Ulianov, V. I., *see* Lenin

Ulianova, Maria, 16

Uritsky, M. S., 41

## V

Vereschak, S., tribute to Stalin, 32

Voltaire, 14, 72

Voroshilov, Klementi, 46, 47, 89, 104; applies to Stalin's military ideas, 105-106, career of, 107; 121, 122, 129; character of, 131

Vyshinsky, A., 100

## W

Walpole, H., 86

Webb, Sydney, 56

Wrangel, General Baron, 50, 52

## Y

Yagoda, H., 97-99, 100, 101, 129

Yakir, General, 106

Yevodkimov, 100

Yegorov, General, 107

Yenukidze, A., 26

Yezhov, N., 102, 106

*Ypered*, 23

Yudenich, General, 47-50, 103, 104

## Z

Zhukov, General, 131

Zinoviev, Gregory I., 59, 60; supports Stalin, 63; polemic against Trotsky, 64, 65, 66; character of, 66; with Lenin, 66; president of the Communist International, 66; defeated by Stalin, 67-69, 70, 85, 92; execution of, 101, 129







